The Catholic
Theological Union
LIBRARY
Chicago, Ill.

THE COMMANDMENTS AND SACRAMENTS

EXPLAINED IN FIFTY-TWO DISCOURSES

WITHDRAWN
The Catholic Theological Union
LIBRARY
Chicago, Ill.

BY THE
RIGHT REV. BISHOP HORNIHOLD
AUTHOR OF THE REAL PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLICS

EX LIBRIS PROVINCIAE
PRO STUDIO THEOL.
S. S. CORDIS JESU.

COPYRIGHTED, 1910

CHRISTIAN PRESS ASSOCIATION PUBLISHING CO.
NEW YORK

H 816 c

7609

CONTENTS.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

DISC. PAGE.

I.—On faith, hope, and charity, the worship of God..... 1
II.—Of a sacrifice, and in what it consists..... 12
III.—On praying to saints, and superstition..... 25
IV.—On serving God in spirit and truth..... 38

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

I.—The keeping holy of the Sabbath day..... 53
II.—On cursing and blaspheming..... 68

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

I.—The keeping holy the Sabbath day..... 80
II.—The obligation of hearing Mass upon Sundays and holydays..... 95
III.—The explanation of the first part of the Mass, and what belongs to it 108
IV.—The explanation of the Mass from the canon, and the ceremonies thereof..... 121

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

I.—The duty of children to their parents..... 135
II.—The obligation of parents towards their children..... 145
III.—The reward of dutiful children..... 151
IV.—The punishment of disobedient children..... 158

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

I.—The grievousness of the sin of murder, and who they are that are guilty of it..... 167
II.—On scandal, and the injury thereby done to our neighbors..... 177
III.—The injury scandal causes to those who commit it..... 188
IV.—On detraction..... 197
V.—Restitution to be made by the detractor..... 209
VI.—When and to whom we are to speak of the failings of our neighbor. 220
VII.—On the love of our neighbor..... 231
VIII.—On anger..... 243
IX.—The remedies against anger..... 253

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

I.—On the sin of impurity..... 263
II.—The punishment of the sin of impurity..... 272
III.—The remedies against the sin of impurity..... 281

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

I.—On theft..... 290
II.—The obligation of making restitution to those whom we have injured by theft..... 299

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

I.—On false witnesses and lies..... 308
II.—On rash judgment..... 318

THE NINTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS.

I.—On evil thoughts and desires..... 331
II.—On self love, and the proper remedies to master it—being the conclusion or final discourse..... 341

THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL.

DISC. PAGE.

I.—On the nature, necessity, dignity, and efficacy of the Sacraments, as also the number of them, and by whom they were instituted..... 353

BAPTISM.

I.—On the necessity and effects of baptism..... 364
II.—On the ceremonies used in baptism..... 372
III.—On the obligations we contract in baptism..... 380

CONFIRMATION.

I.—On the ceremonies used in confirmation..... 387
II.—On the necessity and effects of it, as also the preparations that are necessary for the worthy receiving of it..... 396

HOLY EUCHARIST.

I.—On the Real Presence, clearly proved from the figures and prophecies of the Old Testament, as also from St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians: and that the belief thereof is no ways contrary to sense or reason..... 403
II.—On the Real Presence, evidently proved from the clear text of the Evangelists, and from the unanimous consent of the primitive Fathers and Doctors of the Church..... 415
III.—On the effects and benefits of this Sacrament, and that it is not necessary for the laity to receive in both kinds..... 425
IV.—On the dispositions and preparations for a worthy communion..... 435
V.—On the goodness and liberality of God, in leaving to his church this adorable sacrament; as also the happiness of those who worthily receive it..... 444
VI.—On the heinous crime of an unworthy communion, and who those are who are guilty of it..... 456

PENANCE.

I.—On the necessity of penance, and in what it consists..... 464
II.—On Contrition..... 477
III.—On Confession..... 491
IV.—On a Sacrilegious Confession..... 505
V.—On Satisfaction..... 517

EXTREME UNCTION.

On the necessity and effects of it, and the dispositions necessary for the worthy receiving of it..... 529

HOLY ORDERS.

On the effects and different degrees of Orders, and the office of each degree; as also the respect and obedience that is due to the Bishops and Priests of the Church..... 540

MATRIMONY.

On the effects of it—in what it consists—by whom instituted—the obligations of those who are about to marry, and of those who are already married.. 551

DISCOURSES

ON THE

TEN COMMANDMENTS.

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not have strange Gods in my sight.—Deut. ch. 5, v. 7.

You know, dear Christians, that you are obliged to keep the commandments of God, and that under no less penalty than eternal damnation, of being for ever excluded from the sight of God, the joy of heaven, and doomed to everlasting woe, the torments of hell. My design is not only to instruct you in your duty, but, what is still of greater consequence, to prevail on you to comply with it. Consider then the first duty Almighty God lays upon you by these words, THOU SHALT NOT HAVE STRANGE GODS BEFORE ME; in which, as well as in all the rest of the commandments, there is contained a double precept, the one affirmative, and the other negative; that is to say, it both commands and forbids, for the meaning is, THOU SHALT WORSHIP THE TRUE GOD: this it commands. THOU SHALT NOT WORSHIP STRANGE, OR ANY OTHER GOD; this it forbids. They are reciprocal, one being clearly contained in the other.

In this discourse I shall only explain in part what it commands; for it is a commandment of a large extent, though delivered in few words.

THOU SHALT WORSHIP ME, THE TRUE GOD. How must we do it? By FAITH, by HOPE, and by CHARITY; we must believe in him, we must hope in him, and we must love him: this is truly to worship God. He is not to be served with bare forms, but in spirit and

in truth; not by an exterior behavior only, but from our hearts, with all the powers of our soul; "But the hour cometh, (says our Saviour) and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth." John, iv. 23.

The supreme ruler of the world has not only made us, but all things else for our use. Now as we are the head and superior part of the creation, we must pay him homage for ourselves, and all the rest. And as our soul is our noblest part, a pure and spiritual being, endowed with a power both to know and love; these doubtless ought to be employed in the service of him that made us what we are; these ought to be consecrated and devoted to him; our *understanding*, by giving an absolute and entire credit to what he says: a respectful adoration, and a sincere acknowledgment of his incomprehensible greatness; our *will*, by an entire submission, and an absolute dependence on his; a real and hearty acknowledgment of his goodness and benefits; and a zeal and ardent love for his glory, who is his own happiness and our greatest good. Now, as in our knowledge of God there ought to be no error; so we must believe absolutely, through divine revelation, that is, by faith. And as in our worship there ought to be no superstition, so religion must govern our practice.

Our first duty then is to worship God by *faith*, that is, we must believe him. Why? Because God is unalterable, subject to no change; he is faithful without any iniquity; he is the supreme and first truth, who, as he cannot say any thing amiss, so he cannot deny what he says: who, as he cannot be deceived, so he cannot deceive. This supreme authority then requires our absolute assent to all he says, to all he reveals, or any ways makes manifest to us, and this without any fear or hesitation, without any wavering or doubt, whensoever it is sufficiently proposed to us. Ecclesiasticus tells us, "You that fear the Lord, believe him, and your reward shall not be made void." (Eccles. ii. 8.) And St. Paul tells us, "Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and is a re-

warder to them that seek him." (Heb. xi. 6.) And St. John tells us, that "He that believeth in him is not judged, but he that doth not believe is already judged; because he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John, iii. 18.) We therefore truly worship and honor God when we steadfastly believe what he says, and doubtless our reward will not be void; we honor him, when we own and profess his faith, notwithstanding the hazard of our goods, liberty, or life. And he accepts it kindly, our Saviour promising us, that as we have owned him before men, he will own us before his Father, who is in heaven. O blessed return and glorious reward! But, on the contrary, we highly dishonor him, when we do not credit what he says, or do not believe what he has revealed, because we cannot fancy it to be so; or that it does not suit with our mistaken reason, or silly judgments; this is to call in question his veracity, and to arraign truth itself. Again, we highly dishonor him, when we prefer our interest, or even our lives, before his honor, and choose rather to quit our faith, than our subsistence; as if omnipotence could not recompense all the temporal loss we can possibly suffer on his account; this he resents so severely, as to assure us, he will deny those before his Father in heaven, who deny him before men on earth. What a confusion and misfortune will this be, to be renounced by Christ! to have him no more for an advocate, a mediator, or saviour, but a terrible judge! If we are ashamed of his faith, if we deny it, he will be ashamed of us, he will deny us when we come to appear at the bar of heaven, at our last great trial for life or death, that is, eternal happiness, or everlasting misery.

We must, therefore, believe all that God has revealed, that is, all the articles of our faith; for to disbelieve, or even deliberately doubt of any, when sufficiently proposed to us, is a mortal sin. And though we are not bound to own our faith to every impertinent inquirer, yet we can never deny it to any, and are always obliged to make profession of it, when it is required by public

authority, whatever may be the consequence of such a profession We are likewise obliged to know and believe, that there is one God and three persons, and that the second person became man, and died for us. Without this faith we can never be justified, we can never receive any benefit from the sacraments, nor can ever enter into the kingdom of heaven; and herein nothing but invincible ignorance can excuse us: St. Paul gives the reason, because, says he, "without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and is a rewarder to them that seek him." Heb. xi. 6.

They sin likewise against this commandment, who are ignorant of the creed, and do not believe, at least the substance of every article: who are ignorant of the seven sacraments, and what belongs to them, at least those of penance and the eucharist: who are wilfully ignorant of such points of faith as are solemn in the church, and are the continual practice of the faithful: as what Mass is, and the obligation we have to hear it upon Sundays and holydays, if not lawfully hindered; that there is a purgatory, or third place, and that the souls therein detained are assisted by the prayers of the faithful; and, above all, by the adorable sacrifice of the Mass; that it is lawful to desire the prayers and intercession of the saints, and that their relics and images are to be reverenced.

In fine, they sin against this commandment, who are ignorant of the rules of morality, and of a good life; such as are contained in the ten commandments, and those of the church. For how can they serve God, and do their duty, that are ignorant of it? Hence you see, dear Christians, how grievously those sin, who neglect instruction, who take little care to be informed in their duty themselves, or to have those instructed who are under their charge. To worship, therefore, God as we ought, by faith, we must not only believe what he reveals, but must likewise endeavor to be instructed in that way which leads to him. This is our first duty; our second is, to *hope* in him.

We must hope in God. Why so? Because he has promised immense rewards, and is infinitely powerful; he can be as good as his word: he is also faithful; he will be as good as his word Add to this, his boundless clemency, his wonderful proneness to do good, and his profuse and generous liberality, in giving his servants a faithful assurance of future good, an everlasting inheritance, an immortal crown, the kingdom of heaven, and life eternal, in a full possession of himself; a happiness every way great, every way full, every way divinely satisfying the utmost desires of our capacious soul. Have not we reason then to hope in him? Is not this duty built upon such solid grounds, as are sufficient to move the most desponding heart? Yet, if you please, still add to this assurance the dear pledge God has given us in his only Son, whom for our sake, says St. Paul to the Romans, "he spared not, but delivered him up for us all; and with him he has given us all things." (Chap. viii. 32.) Ah, Christian! what a pledge is this! Ah! what a testimony of his goodness towards us! what a comfortable and solid foundation of hope! Can he, (blessed be ever his holy name!) that for us delivered up to death, even the most cruel, his only and dearly beloved Son; can he, I say, refuse us any thing? And as he delivered him up to death for the meanest and worst of us, has not the meanest and worst of us then motives enough to lift up our hands, and to hope, not only for the pardon of our sins, if we come to him with a repenting heart, through the merits of this divine redeemer, but also upon our future fidelity, a great, a glorious, and everlasting reward, even God himself? Therefore, says the divine Psalmist, "Trust in him, all ye congregations of people, pour out your hearts before him, God is our helper for ever:" (Psalm lxi. 9.) And Ecclesiasticus says, "Ye that fear the Lord hope in him, and mercy shall come to you for your delight." (Chap n. 9.).....(and a little after,) "Children, behold the generations of men, says he, and know ye, that no one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded; for who hath continued in his com

mandment, and hath been forsaken? or who hath called upon him, and he despised him? for God is compassionate and merciful, and will forgive sins in the day of tribulation, and he is a protector of all that seek him in truth." Chap. iv. 11, &c.

How grievously then do those offend God, and transgress his commandment: First, who, being terrified by the multitude and grievousness of their sins, despair of obtaining pardon of God? This was the wicked sin of Cain: "My wickedness is too great to deserve pardon." (Chap. iv. 19.) This was likewise the sin of Judas, who, after he had betrayed innocent blood, despaired, and hanged himself. What can we fear? God has died for us, and is not his death sufficient to cancel the worst of crimes, if we comply with our duty, and place our trust in him?

Secondly—Those grievously offend our merciful God, who considering their small inclination to virtue, the strength of their evil habits, and despairing to overcome them through God's grace, abandon themselves to all wickedness; such as these St. Paul speaks of in his epistle to the Ephesians, "despairing," says he, "abandoned themselves to impurity, unto the working of all uncleanness." (Chap. iv. 19.) Such also the prophet Jeremias speaks of, whom he had admonished, in the name of God, to return from their evil ways; who replied, "We have despaired, and we will follow our own thoughts, and we will execute every one of us the wickedness of his evil heart." Chap. ii. 4, 5, 6.) I pray God some Christians, whatever they profess, do not practise this method.

Thirdly—Those sin grievously, who, continuing in the practice of mortal sin, nevertheless still presume on God's mercy, who, though they may have some weak purposes of repentance hereafter, yet defer it as carelessly, from day to day, as if they were sure of the gift and favor of repentance whenever they pleased: this we call presumption of God's mercy. St Paul gives these a severe rebuke in his epistle to the Romans: "Dost thou despise the riches of his goodness, and patience, and long suffering? Dost thou not know that the benignity of God leadeth thee to

penance? But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and just judgment of God, who will render to every one according to his works." (Ch. ii. 4, 5, 6.) And before him the Holy Ghost has warned us of this very dangerous presumption in Ecclesiasticus, "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day; for his wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance he will destroy thee." Chap. v. 8, 9.

Fourthly—Those sin against the precept of *hope*, who confide in their own endeavors, and not in the help and assistance of God. This Almighty God declares to us by his prophet Jeremias, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." (Chap. xvii. 5.) In all our difficulties, therefore, though we ought not to neglect human means, yet our chief and first resource ought to be to God, who is our hope, strength, and support.

Lastly—They sin in some measure against this virtue, who leave off their prayers, and all hopes of obtaining what they ask, because they do not quickly receive what they desire. They ought to reflect, says St. Augustin, "that many things are not denied us, but only deferred, to be granted at a more seasonable time." (Tract. 102, in Joh.) "If he makes delay, (says the prophet Habacuc) expect him; for coming he will come, and will not tarry." (Ch. ii. 3.) To serve and honor God, as we ought, we must entirely believe him, we must place our hope and confidence in him, and we must also *love* him; which is our third duty.

To serve God as we ought, we must love him. Why? Because he is perfectly good and infinitely amiable; and we have reason to be overjoyed, that he will accept of our love. We must love him likewise, because he has loved us. Could we but consider as we ought, the riches of God's goodness towards us, as St. Paul terms it, sure we could not but love him. He himself is all perfection, and stands in need of none of us. He is infinitely

rich in glory, full, and can receive no more His power, his wisdom, his goodness are immense, without possibility of increase. in a word, his perfections can never be improved. Thus absolutely great and happy in himself alone, and this beyond all time, even from an incomprehensible eternity, and must continue for an endless duration: yet he was pleased to think of us, and make man like unto himself, stamping his own image on our souls, and adorning them with grace, a participation of his divine nature. Thus beautified, he could not but see his own likeness in us, and could not but love what he saw.

Having thus created us perfect, he designed us not to drudge in the world, or to spend our days in grief, and to end them in misery; but to pass from the short and inferior satisfactions on earth, even without death, to the great and everlasting joys of heaven. Now could this infallible goodness form us after a nobler pattern than himself? Or could his generous liberality have a higher aim, or a nobler design, than to make us for himself to be his servants, nay more, his adopted children, heirs of heaven, and coheirs with Jesus Christ? Blessed God of heaven and earth! what are we to be so loved and honored by thee? "What is man, that thou art thus mindful of him?" (Psalm v.) Yet, dear Christians, I have more to say than all this: when, by our folly, our pride, our disobedience, our wilful wickedness, we have lost all this, and forfeited all those blooming hopes, and cast ourselves down from this pitch of honor, and the fairest prospect of bliss, into the jaws of death, and into innumerable miseries that were to forerun the great and eternal ones that were to follow; and these of such a nature, that they could not be redressed, or mastered by our best endeavors; no, nothing could satisfy our offended God, and draw us out of this abyss of woe, but the death and sufferings of his only Son, whom he gave for us, and ordered his sufferings and his death for our ransom. Could there be any thing dearer to him, or more valuable, than his only co-eternal Son? Him he gave for us, him he crucified,

to free our wilful weakness from this wretched state, and put us once more in our way to heaven, the happiness we were once designed for. O ye heavens be astonished at this! what a favor! what a blessing.

Ah! could we but comprehend what God is, reflecting upon what we are, we might measure the greatness of this love, this charity and condescension, to stoop so low to raise us; to suffer so much for such (I wish I could not say) ungrateful wretches. Then we might make some estimate of our obligations to our God. But still this is not all; our Redeemer was not content to suffer and die for us only, but he was pleased to lead a mean and painful life for three and thirty years and upwards amongst us.

He knew our ignorance and backwardness to good; and as he loved us tenderly, he would not leave us to angels to be instructed, but takes us into his own care, and will be himself our master; he himself will inform us of our ways, and direct our steps by his own. But he had not long continued this humble and painful task, for our improvement, but our stubbornness would not be mastered; and corrupt nature, being unwilling to be informed in truth and duty, chose rather to part with this divine master, than her darling vice and errors. Yet when our ingratitude was contriving to send him away by a cruel death, his goodness was contriving the greatest blessings for us, such a pledge of his love as none but he could invent, none but he could give, viz. his own self, under the appearance of bread and wine at his last supper, and still continues the same in the adorable sacrament of the eucharist, to be the nourishment and strength of our souls. O Christian souls! what can be more engaging, what can be more powerful (were we rightly disposed) to lead us to our great end?

In a word, he gave us himself in his nativity, to be our companion, our master, and our guide: he gave us himself in the eucharist, to be our comfort, our strength, and our support: he gave us himself, when he died on the cross, to be our pledge, our ransom, and our surety: lastly, he gave us himself in heaven, to

be all in all to us, our inconceivable, great, and eternal happiness. And what can God give more?

Thus God loves us; must not we then love him, when we see this ocean of charity and love flow from God? What wretches must we be if we love him not? Can we ever expect to share in his glory, if we comply not with this duty, so much desired, so much pressed by him:—"Son give me thy heart!" (Prov. xxiii. 26.) This homage we must pay to him as our creator, our redeemer, and our friend; this is what this first commandment requires of us, and whereupon the whole law and the prophets depend, without this we can never serve him as we ought; for he tells us, "he is a jealous God, admits of no rival in his love, but visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto many thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." (Deut. v. 9, 10.) So the beloved apostle assures us, "that he that loves not, remains in death." And St. Paul's zeal carries him so far as to say, "He that loves not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed." 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

By this commandment then, you see, we are obliged to acts of faith, hope, and charity: to believe God, to hope in God, and to love God. But how must we know when we love God, and who those are that love him, and who do not? Our Saviour himself answers this question, "If any man loves me, he will keep my commandments." (John xiv. 23.) And St. John again in his first epistle tells us that, "Who says he knows him, and does not keep his commandments, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but he who keep his words, doubtless the love of God is perfect in him, and hereby we know that we are in him; who says, that he remains in him, must walk as he has walked." (Ch. ii. 4, 5.) And in chap. iii. 24, "He that keeps his commandments, remains in God, and God in him," and again, chap. v. 3, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."

Whereupon St. Gregory the Great says, "The testimony of

love is in the performance of our duty, for then we truly love God, when we observe his commandments, and refrain from our pleasures; for whosoever is carried away by unlawful desires, let him say what he pleases, he loves not, and he proves it evidently by his behavior."

Those who neglect then the service of God, their daily and usual prayers, or say them carelessly; do they love God who remain in sin, or follow the practice of cursing, swearing, and abusing his sacred name? do they love God, who profane the Sabbath, and mispend the days consecrated to his service? do they love God, who bear animosities and enmities in their hearts against their brethren? do they love God, who yield to uncleanness, and have it often in their thoughts and discourse? do they love God, who continue in the practice of injustice, or are continually censuring their neighbor in words, or thoughts, &c., do they love God? No, no, let them say what they will, it is certain they do not love God, nor comply with this first and great commandment: we have Christ's own word for it. We must therefore love God, and often raise up our hearts to him by acts of faith, hope, and charity.

When must we love God? I answer, first, when we frequent the sacraments, particularly the eucharist and penance. This the Council of Trent seems to require in the 6 Sess. c. 6, where it says, "That sinners dispose themselves to justification, when they begin to love God, as the fountain of all justice." And in the 3d Can. "If any one shall say, that without the preventing (or forerunning) inspiration, and assistance of the Holy Ghost, that a man can believe, hope, love, or repent as he ought, so that the grace of justification be granted him, let him be accursed." Secondly—when we approach the sacrament of the altar, the blessed eucharist, we ought to make an act of love, because it is the sacrament of charity and the greatest pledge of love. Thirdly—when we have received an extraordinary benefit from Almighty God: for here ingratitude seems very criminal.

Fourthly—when we are assaulted by any dangerous and vehement temptation, we cannot do better than to raise in our souls an act of the love of God, calling to mind those words of the apostle: "Who will separate us (says he) from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword. In all these we conquer for his sake, who has loved us." (Rom. viii. 35.) Fifthly—when we are in danger of death; for none, says St. Augustin, "should depart this life without repentance, though he be not conscious to himself of any great sin; because," says he, "nothing secures our repentance but the hatred of sin and the love of God. Lastly—during the whole course of this mortal life, we cannot do better than frequently form in our hearts acts of the love of God, in return for his infinite love to us; witness all the dear pledges of his infinite love. Let us be grateful in frequently owning them, and endeavor to make some suitable return, and to advance daily in it." (Aug. Ep. clv. lib. 52.)

For the path of the just, as the wise man says, "is as it were a shining light, which advances and increases into a perfect day, which is only in heaven above, in the enjoyment of God." Prov. iv.

DISCOURSE II.

ON THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not have strange Gods in my sight.—Deut. ch. 5, v. 7.

In the foregoing discourse on this commandment, I told you we must adore and worship God; we must acknowledge him to be the supreme Lord of us, and all things; and we must adhere to him with all the faculties of our soul; by *faith*, by *hope*, and by *charity*. We must believe what he says, hope for what he promises, and love him above all things: and this as our creator,

who made us what we are; as our Redeemer, who saved us from the endless miseries we deserved; as our last end, who alone can make us happy for ever, by the communication of an infinite good, no less than his own self.

Is this all this commandment obliges us to do? This is a great deal, if well considered, but not all. We must likewise comply with all the duties religion imposes upon us. What is religion? "It is a moral virtue, by which we give to God the supreme honor and worship that is due to him, as the first beginning, and last end of all things. What are the acts of religion? They are of two sorts, *interior* and *exterior*, formed in our hearts, and expressed in our behavior. The interior are prayer and devotion. What is prayer? Prayer is an elevation of our mind to God, whilst we ask of him such things as conduce to our salvation." What is devotion? It is an humble and pious affection towards God. It is humble, upon the sense we have of our own weakness and insufficiency to do anything of ourselves, available to our eternal good; and of our entire dependence on him for all we have, and all we hope. It is pious, upon the consideration of the divine clemency and goodness, who will doubtless assist us in all we want, if we ask it as we ought. By such a prayer we honor God, in owning him to be the author and disposer of all things, and from whom alone we seek all the good we can have, either in time or eternity.

The exterior acts of religion are three, *adoration*, *sacrifice*, and *vows*. Adoration is likewise two-fold, interior and exterior, answering to the two parts of which we are composed, soul and body. To adore God then as we ought, we must do it interiorly in our hearts, as well as exteriorly in our behavior; for without it our adoration will neither be acceptable to God, nor available to ourselves. We may, no doubt, have a very demure and humble exterior, without any devotion or respect in our hearts, as it is usual with hypocrites; but we can scarcely have a pious respect for God in our hearts, but we shall have a suitable exterior.

When we see persons then, in the presence of God, and who ought to say their prayers, frequently gazing about, lolling indecently, or kneeling carelessly on one knee, without any necessity, we cannot but think they have small respect for God in their hearts, and as little sense of their own wants and spiritual good. For as St. Augustin says in his book entitled, *Care for the Dead*, "When we pray we behave ourselves like supplicants kneeling, holding up our hands, or prostrate kneeling on the ground, and the like. It is true," says he, "God sees our hearts, and needs not these visible signs to know the disposition of them: yet by these we are moved to pray with more humility and greater fervor." (Chap. v.) It is true this respectful behavior comes from a precedent pious disposition in the soul; yet when it is once produced, it increases the fervor of the heart, and gives life to that very disposition that gave it birth. So, like true adorers, we adore God in spirit and truth, when our exterior behavior suits with, and does not believe the interior pious affections of our soul.

The next exterior act of religion is *sacrifice;* and this at present I shall explain to you. What is a sacrifice? It is an exterior action, performed by a lawful minister, whereby we make a public acknowledgment, and a solemn protestation of God's sovereignty and supreme dominion over us, and our absolute dependence on him, with all subjection and service, as his creatures, who have our beginning, our continuance, and our end; our life and death from him alone.

These were of two sorts; the bloody sacrifice, where the victim was killed; such were most of the sacrifices of the old law: and the unbloody sacrifices, where the victim was not killed; such was the sacrifice of Melchisedech, who offered unto God bread and wine.

This testimony of his supreme dominion over us, and our entire dependence on him, God always, even from the creation of the world, required of us: this duty was required of Cain and Abel, as we read in Genesis, (chap. iv.) and continued by the succeed-

ing servants of God till the law of Moses, wherein they were expressly commanded by Almighty God, and were very numerous; yet may be reduced to three or four heads.

The first of these sacrifices were called *Holocausts*, or burnt-offerings; these were entirely devoted to the honor of the divine majesty: here, after the victim was killed, it was all burnt upon the altar, to signify that the whole man, and all that belonged to him, is subject to the dominion of God.

The second was a sin offering, or a *propitiatory* sacrifice, which was offered to God for the expiation of sin, and to move him to be merciful to us. Herein, part of the victim was burnt, and part was assigned to the priest for his subsistence; to signify that the pardon of our sins was granted to us by Almighty God, through the ministry and prayers of the priest.

The third was a *pacific* offering, which was twofold; first, to return thanks to Almighty God for past favors; and secondly, to beg and move him to grant us new ones. Herein the victim was divided into three parts; the first was burnt in honor of God; the second was assigned to the priest; and the third to the person that made the offering, to signify, as St. Thomas says, that our salvation proceeds from God, through the direction of his ministers, and our own endeavors co-operating thereunto.

All these sacrifices were only figures, and shadows of one, and that truly a great one, viz. the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, once offered by him to his eternal Father upon the cross in a bloody manner, to expiate many sins, even the sins of the whole world; and daily offered upon the altar, by the priests of the new law, in an unbloody manner to perpetuate the memory, and apply to us the virtue, of that great sacrifice, once offered upon Mount Calvary, for the redemption of all mankind.

What do we call this sacrifice? We call it the Mass. Wherein does it consist? It consists in the words of consecration; when the priest in the person of Christ, says these words over the bread, "this is my body;" which when said, he kneels down

and adores, then holds it up for the people to adore it. Then over the wine in the chalice he says, "this is the chalice of my blood, the new and eternal testament, the mystery of faith which shall be shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins;" here he kneels and adores, then elevates it for those that are present, to see and adore it. This shews that Christ is really present on the altar. But wherein consists the nature of a sacrifice? in this, I say, that although after consecration, under the appearance of bread, there be really present, not only the body but also the blood, the soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, Christ whole and entire, both God and man, and the same under the appearance of wine; yet, by the words of consecration, they are mystically separated; because Christ said separately, "this is my body, and this is my blood;" which includes a lively and efficacious representation of the violent death he suffered. So the words of consecration are, as I may say, the spiritual sword, which makes a mystical separation betwixt the body and blood: and though death be here only by representation, yet it is a real sacrifice, inasmuch as Christ is represented under the figure of death, or placed upon the altar under those signs which represent his death.

How do we, by this sacrifice, own God's sovereign dominion over us, our absolute dependence on him, and give him that supreme honor and adoration that is due to him? We do this, when to him we offer Christ sacrificed on the altar, where his death on the cross is lively represented and offered to his Father in acknowledgment that he is master of life and death; and hereby we render to God, through Jesus Christ, the most sovereign worship that is possible. Alas; Christian soul, there is such a great, or rather such an infinite, disproportion betwixt God and his creatures, that let us do what we can of ourselves to adore his majesty, to return him thanks for his benefits, to satisfy his justice for our sins, or to obtain of him the graces that are necessary for the well governing of our lives, we cannot do it

worthily; and it is only Jesus Christ who can present to his Father an adoration, a thanksgiving, a satisfaction, or prayer, that deserves to be accepted by him; because he is not only man, but also God. Now he performed all these duties by the sacrifice he offered upon the cross, in so great, in so worthy, and so superabundant a manner, that God himself, though great and infinitely adorable as he is, cannot desire more.

No, it is this adoration, it is this worship of the Son of God, which we daily offer to the Father in the Mass: this is the treasure, and this is the blessing, and a blessing indeed, which he has left with us, and will continue to the end of the world in his church. And it is here that he himself is the chief priest, as well as the victim: he adores his Father in us, and for us, and is adored by us. He adores in us as our chief, or our head. He adores for us, as our priest, who offers himself by the ministry of his servants, and he is adored by us as our God. What a happiness then to assist devoutly at Mass!

Secondly, is this sacrifice of the Mass propitiatory, that is, is it a means to appease God's anger against us, and move him to have mercy on us? Yes, Christian soul, and the most powerful means to atone for our sins, to move him to grant us a sense of our duty, and true repentance, and even the pardon of the punishment due to our sins; because here is the same Christ offered on the altar in an unbloody manner, who in a bloody manner offered himself on the cross for our redemption; and this cannot but be acceptable to God, and make him look upon us with a more propitious eye; because it represents to him that voluntary death which his beloved Son has suffered for us sinners, or rather places before his eyes that very Son of his under the representation of his death, by which his wrath has been appeased. Upon this account St. John tells us, "My little children," says he, "I write these things unto you, that ye may not sin; yet, nevertheless, if any of you have sinned, we have an advocate to God the Father, Jesus Christ, who is just, for it is he that is

the victim of propitiation for our sins, and not only for our sins, but also for all those of the whole world." (1 Epist. ii. 1, 2.) Oh! what an advantage and what a comfort is this! for a repenting sinner to have Jesus Christ for an advocate, who of himself owes nothing to the divine justice, and has also fully satisfied for our sins. He requires then what is justly his due, when he asks of his Father grace and mercy for sinners. He has borne our infirmities, discharged our debts, and left us a copious redemption: Can we then fear to be excluded from a share in the merits of that blood, which is no less than infinite? "If the blood of goats and oxen," says St. Paul, "sanctified the polluted, to the cleansing of the flesh; how much more doth the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to serve the living God? and therefore he is the mediator of the New Testament."

I further add the decree of the Council of Trent: "If any one shall say that the Mass is only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, or a bare remembrance of the sacrifice on the cross, and not propitiatory; or that it only avails the person that receives, and ought not to be offered up for the living and the dead, for sins, their punishments and satisfactions, and other necessities, let him be anathematized." Sess. 22. Can. 3.

Yet we are not to believe that the sacrifice of the Mass atones for our sins, without a good and pious disposition on our sides: or that it will be available to us, without true repentance, or the amendment of our lives; or that by one Mass all the punishment due to our sins is remitted: but, as the same council adds: "if we come to God with a sincere heart, a true faith, with fear and reverence, truly sorrowful and penitent, we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid, for God being appeased by this offering, grants us grace, and the favor of repentance, and forgives crimes, even the most enormous: for it is one and the same sacrifice with that which heretofore was offered upon the cross, it is the same host or victim, and he who offered himself then,

is the same who *now* daily offers himself by the hands of the priest; it is only the manner of offering that is different." Chap. ii.

"When I perceive my imperfections," says St. Bernard, "I am not discouraged, I distrust not, I know not what I will do; I will receive the chalice of salvation, and call upon the name of our Lord." (Ser. 22. in Cant.) And in another place, "My God," says he, "all that I can give thee is this miserable body of mine, which if I give, it is well; yet if anything be wanting, I add thy body too. O Lord, from this infinite treasure I supply what is wanting in me." Ser. in Epiph.

Yes, dear Christians, and so may you, if you assist devoutly at Mass. O what a treasure, and what a blessing is this! Is it not then astonishing to see people so careless and negligent in laying hold of, and improving this advantage.

Thirdly—Is the Mass a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving? Yes, and the greatest we can possibly offer to God. Alas! we are poor and miserable; we know we are nothing of ourselves, and have nothing of our own to return to God, for the great benefits of our creation, preservation, and redemption; for the favor of being called to the Catholic faith, and for the manifold blessings we receive thereby; for the many graces he bestows upon us, and the many evils from which he continually preserves us. What have we to return to God for these, that is worth his acceptance? He knows our poverty and want, and was sensible of it, and therefore put into our hands this adorable victim, this sacrifice of thanks, and gives us power to offer it to him in return for all his favors to us, and even this too. And what can be more acceptable to heaven, what can be more pleasing to God, than this his only Son, this divine victim, his goodness has made ours? By this we consecrate our prayers; by this we return our thanks; and these, no doubt, when they come from a grateful heart, are great through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, and greater cannot be given to God. Wherefore the priest never fails to return thanks in the preface of the Mass; "Let us give

thanks to the Lord our God;" and it is answered, "it is truly fit and just," and then he goes on, "it is truly fit and just, right, and profitable, that we always, and every where, give thee thanks, O sacred Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God, through Christ our Lord." To hear Mass then devoutly, and to offer up to God this divine sacrifice, is the most grateful and effectual return we can make to him for all the favors and graces we have received from him.

Fourthly—Is the sacrifice of the Mass also impetratory? that is, is it a powerful means to move Almighty God to grant us such favors and graces as are necessary to lead a virtuous life, and bring us, in the end, to an eternal crown? Yes, and doubtless, the most powerful means; and of this we cannot be but persuaded, if we consider who it is that lies sacrifieed on the altar, interceding for us. Though we have no deserts of our own, he has; though our prayers are of small force, his are not. It was the sense of our miseries and wants that brought him from heaven, placed him in the world, and nailed him on the cross; it is the same goodness that lays him daily on our altars, to renew the memory of his passion, and to apply its virtue to our souls, thus to move his eternal Father to grant us such aid and assistance, that his sufferings may not be lost upon us. Think you then, can there be any prayer like unto this? Can we engage heaven in our interest by any more powerful means, than by offering up this spotless Lamb of God, to the Father of all mercy, to be our advocate, to plead our cause, and intercede for us? Can he look upon him, and not look upon us, for whom he is sacrificed? What he might possibly at another time deny us, sure he will not now refuse his only Son: what our unworthiness dares not presume, his merits will certainly procure. He has told us "whatsoever you ask my Father in my name he will give it you." (John, xvi. 23.) Let us ask them now, for sure we cannot have a more favorable time. "The angels," says St. Chrysostom, "prostrate themselves before the throne of God, and make use

of this juncture, as the most favorable, to beg graces and favors for men; and it is then that they pray for us with greater instance and fervor." (Hom. xxvii. ad Prop. Ant.) And should not we do so too? should not we be careful to manage these precious moments to our best advantage; and *never* out of indifference, carelessness, or sloth, neglect to hear Mass, neglect so favorable an opportunity to send up our petitions to heaven for all our wants and necessities.

This is the great sacrifice of the new law, infinitely exceeding in dignity and value all that went before it; and this is the greatest mystery of our religion, where Almighty God, as the council of Trent expresses it, pours forth, with open hands, the treasures of his love. Frame the best idea you can of God's liberality, and you will find it all epitomized in this: so we may truly cry out with the psalmist, "he hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works." (Psalm cx. 4.) Here you may receive grace to enlighten your understanding, and to inflame your will; here you may receive grace, if not to extinguish, at least to moderate your passions and to overcome, if not to exempt you from temptations; here in an eminent degree, you honor God in Jesus Christ. Here is the most powerful means to obtain repentance, to appease God's anger, and to satisfy for our sins; this is the most effectual method of shewing ourselves grateful to God, of returning him thanks for all his favors, and that in the most agreeable manner. In fine, nothing can more efficaciously influence heaven in our cause, or prevail upon the Almighty to grant us new favors and graces to support our weakness, and lead us in the paths of virtue. Sure no nation was ever blest like us, nor no people so favored by heaven! Happy we, had we but prudence and zeal enough to make the best use of it.

Yes, it is not very astonishing to see Christians, who know and believe this, so careless in hearing Mass, so backward in coming to assist at this divine sacrifice, to receive a share of the blessings Christ daily offers them? he is not tired with giving, shall we be

tired with receiving? he daily lies on our altars, and offers up himself to his Father for us; should we not lay hold of the opportunity to make the offering with him for ourselves, and dignify our prayers by his; I know laboring people, who earn their bread with the sweat of their brow, cannot daily share of this blessing; yet sure they are highly blameable, if upon Sundays and holydays they omit this duty, out of sloth, indevotion or negligence; and discover but too evidently, that they labor more for bread than eternity, more for their temporal than their spiritual food, more for earth than heaven. No doubt, it was the great sense the church had of this adorable mystery, and the advantages she knows those reap, who assist devoutly at it, made her oblige all the faithful under mortal sin, to hear Mass upon Sundays and holydays, if not lawfully hindered. How insensible then must those be of God's honor, the precepts of his church, and their own eternal welfare, who upon these days, whereupon they are forbid to labor for bread, take no care to feed their souls, and enrich themselves from this treasure of heaven, even when a temporal blessing on the labors of the following week may often depend upon it?

Christians, was there but one priest in the world, or was this divine sacrifice entirely confined to one only place, what a value should we have for it? How happy should we esteem those who lived near, whose favorable circumstances gave them an opportunity to assist daily at such a mystery, where the Son of God himself is the victim, where he lies daily sacrificed on the altar of our good, to apply the virtue of his passion, and to pour forth his grace, with a liberal hand, on these pious souls that heartily desire it in happy people, should we say, to be so near their God, to have such a blessing at hand, so sovereign a means to honor their maker, to appease his anger, and obtain his favor. How should we often bewail our hard fate, in being so far removed from so great a blessing! What pilgrimages should we see, and with what devotion How would they press to be admitted!

And what respect would they shew when present at these tremendous mysteries?

And can we be less sensible now, because God is more condescending and favorable to us? Can we have a less value for this dear blessing, because his goodness has been pleased to make it more common, and even to have it in our very houses.

The three kings inquired of Herod and the Jews, asking them, "where is he that is born king of the Jews?" St. Peter Chrisol thinks this was not so much a demand to know where the Messias was born, as a secret reproach of their sinful indifference. "They do not ask them," says he, "but they blame them; they accuse the negligent, they reproach the slothful, and they discover the wicked. You have here amongst you a king, and you take no notice of him, you know not where he is. You have here the Messias, so often wished for, and so long expected, and you mind him not; the shepherds have already informed you, and you have not yet paid him your respect and homage. We live in a remote country, yet think it worth our while to take a long journey, even in this season of the year to come and adore; and you, who are so near, have not yet paid this duty. We, who are born to a crown, and have each of us the concern of a kingdom on our hands, judge it our duty and interest to come and cast ourselves at his feet, and offer him our small presents; and you amongst whom he is born, whose natural subjects ye are, still ignorant of the place of his birth." Ser. 156.

Might not the like reproach be made to many careless Christians, who have the opportunity and convenience to assist daily at this sacrifice, and yet, out of sloth, or want of devotion, they do not? How many servants in a family, where Mass is daily said, have this advantage, and yet many frequently neglect it? The common excuse is, they have not time, their business so falls out. Ah! it is an easy matter to find an excuse where there wants a will. They have not time to hear Mass; but they have time enough to spend in idle discourse. They have not time to

hear Mass; but they have time to smoke and drink. They have not time to hear Mass; but they have leisure to entertain a friend, and it may be, at the same time. How many are there who have but half employment, and whose time lies on their hands! had they but zeal and devotion; had they but a sense of this invaluable blessing, they would here spend profitably one half hour in the day to God's honor, and their own great advantage, the eternal interest of their souls. God, who only knows the value of his favor, cannot but be sensible of the neglect.

Think then, dear Christians, and think seriously upon what I have said, call it over again to your minds. This first commandment obliges us not only to believe in God, to hope in God, and to love God; but likewise to adore and worship him, not only exteriorly, by a decent behavior in his presence, but also interiorly in our hearts, by earnest and devout prayer. We must likewise acknowledge his supreme dominion over us, and our entire dependence on him. This has always been done since the beginning of the world, at least since the beginning of sin, by exterior sacrifices, which are all comprised in, and infinitely surpassed by the ever adorable sacrifice of the Mass, which you yourselves may offer up to God; I say, you, for it is not only the priest that offers up the Mass for himself and others, but every one that is devoutly present do, in their way offer it up for themselves and others. Thus after the offertory, the priest expressly says, "pray brethren that mine and your sacrifice may be pleasing in the sight of God the Father omnipotent;" and in the canon he recommends to God, those for whom, says he, we offer this sacrifice, and for those who offer it unto thee. As often then as you can assist at this divine sacrifice, and offer it up to God thus; consider yourself when you are going to hear Mass, as if you were at the foot of the cross; unite yourself with all the powers of your soul, to your Saviour, Jesus Christ, and with him first adore God, that perfect and sovereign being. Secondly,

return him, through this his only Son, your sincere thanks for all the favors and benefits bestowed upon you, both general and particular. Thirdly, offer up this agreeable victim for all the sins you have committed, and for those of the whole world. Fourthly, beg of that goodness that has given you this dear pledge of his love, and beg by it all that grace and assistance that may be necessary for the discharge of your duty to him, that you may so adore and serve him on earth, that you may see and reign with him in heaven.

DISCOURSE III.

ON THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any things that are in heaven above, or that are in the earth beneath, or that abide in the waters under the earth; thou shalt not adore them, and thou shalt not serve them.—Deut. v. 8, 9.

This, dear Christians, is part of the first commandment, and a fuller explanation of that which went before—thou shalt not have strange Gods before me. By this we must not imagine, that the art of painting or carving is forbid, when God himself ordered statues and images to be made, viz. cherubims on the ark, and the brazen serpent in the desert, as we read in Exodus and Numbers. (Exod. xxv. Numb. xxi.) But it forbids to adore and worship statues and images for God, or to believe that there is any divinity in them for which they ought to be adored: as the heathens did, and do at this day; and as the Israelites did, when they made and danced about the golden calf, saying, "these are thy gods, O Israel, that have brought thee out of the land of Egypt;" (Exod. xxxii.) because as the psalmist says, "they transferred the glory due to God, to the image of an ox that eats grass." (Psalm cv.) So Moses says to the people,

"you saw not any similitude in the day that the Lord God spoke to you in Horeb from the midst of the fire, lest perhaps, being deceived, you might make you a graven similitude or image of man, or woman, of beasts, of serpents, or fish; lest perhaps, lifting up thy eyes to heaven, thou see the sun and the moon, and stars, and being deceived by error, thou adore and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath made to serve all nations under heaven." (Deut. iv.) And hereupon says St. Paul, "Being therefore the offspring of God, we must not suppose that the divinity to be like unto gold, or silver, or stone, the graving of art and device of man." Acts, xvii. 29.

We are so far from believing images to be Gods, or that they ought to be worshipped with the honor due to God, that though the council of Trent ordains them to be retained in the church as usual, to put us in mind of good things, it expressly forbids us to believe any divinity or virtue in them, for which they ought to be reverenced; it forbids us to demand any favor of them, or to put any trust in them: and tells us, that all the honor that is given to them is referred to the saints themselves represented by them: so we attribute no other virtue to them, but that of raising in us a remembrance of those they represent. Thus when we look on the image of Christ crucified, it excites in us a more lively remembrance of him, who loved us so as to deliver himself up to death for us. (Gal. ii.) When we bow to the cross, we adore him who has borne our iniquities on the tree. When we bow to or kiss the gospel, we adore the eternal truth which it proposes.

In like manner we understand the honor which we pay to reliques; for we look upon the bodies of saints, as having been victims offered up to God, either by martyrdom, or by patience, and on this account we respect them.

We honor, says St. Hierom, "the reliques of martyrs, that we may adore him whose martyrs they are; that the honor of the servant may redound to the master:" (L. contra Vigil.) who

says he, "that receiveth you, receiveth me." (Matt. x. 40.) "There is a reverence due to the bodies of holy martyrs and others, who reign with Christ, as having been the living members of Christ, says the council of Trent, and the temple of the Holy Ghost, and who will be one day raised again to life, and glorified by him, and *through* which many blessings are bestowed on men by God." Sess. 25.

"A little dust, (says St. Augustin, upon the feast of St. Stephen the martyr, at whose body many miraculous cures had been wrought in his time;) a little dust, says he, has gathered together a numerous congregation of people; the ashes are hid, but the benefits appear. Consider what God reserves for us in the kingdom of the living, when he gives such blessings from the dust of those that are dead." Ser. 217, or 92.

Hence you may observe, that all religious worship ends in God; so if we give any such to creatures, that is, not upon his account, it must be idolatrous. Wherefore as he is our sovereign Lord, and our dependence on him, our greatest devotion, and our most earnest prayer, ought to be immediately directed to him, to God the Father, to God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and all through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer.

Yet nevertheless the church teaches us in the said council of Trent, "that it is good and profitable to beg the prayers of the saints; for doubtless the same charity that prompts us to beg the favor of one another's prayers, moves us to implore the assistance of the saints by their prayers, who as they are more acceptable to God, may be more powerful with him to obtain for us what we want; and certainly the quality of a mediator in Jesus Christ, receives no more prejudice from the intercession made to the saints in heaven, than from the intercession made to the faithful on earth." (Sess. 25.) The words of the council are these: "the saints who reign with Christ, offer up their prayers to God for men, and it is good and profitable to invoke them with humility, and to have recourse to their prayers, and

assistance, for the obtaining benefits of God through his Son Jesus Christ, who is our only Saviour and Redeemer."

Yet the manner of praying to God is different from that of praying to the saints. We beg of God to have mercy on us, and to hear us; but we desire the saints only to pray for us, or to assist us by their prayers; and thus are understood all our prayers to saints, under what form of words soever they are made.

In fine, all the honor we give to saints, to their relics, or to their images, neither takes from, nor diminishes the honor we owe to God, but increases it. Because as in the affection we have for a friend, when we love for his sake, his children, his friends, or whatever is dear unto him, or what resembles him, and brings him to our mind, we do not love him the less, but more. So when we honor God's saints, or whatsoever is dear to him, or puts us in mind of him, we do not honor him less, but more. So though he is a jealous God, jealous both of the love of men, and of his honor, he does not think we divide that honor that is due to him, when out of a due respect to him, we honor those whom he has honored. Thus, as all religious worship springs from God, so it also ends in him.

Now, we sin against this commandment, first, when, in our prayers to the saints, we do not put our whole faith and confidence in God. Secondly, when we give a religious respect to what we know to be extremely doubtful, or counterfeit relics. Thirdly, when we give way to superstition; this is very injurious to God, because hereby persons leave him, to follow the devil, and neglect providence upon the credit of his delusions.

Superstitions are relics of paganism and idolatry, that have been transmitted from generation to generation, by evil and vain credulous persons, from the heathens, who worshipped the devil, to these our days, wherein we ought to worship only the true living God. They are almost innumerable, yet I shall endeavor to reduce them to some heads, and to go on in some order.

First. They are guilty of superstition, who study and profess

art magic, or govern themselves and others by private compacts made with the devil, either by themselves or others: such as these are called magicians, conjurers, wizards, witches, enchanters, soothsayers, cunning-men, fortune-tellers, &c. These the scripture severely condemns, particularly in Deuteronomy: "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God shall give thee, beware lest thou have a mind to imitate the abominations of those nations." Let not there be amongst you a sorcerer, an enchanter, nor one that consulteth with Pithon or divines, or such as seek truth from the dead; for all these things our Lord abhorreth, and for these abominations he will destroy them at thy entering into the land.

Secondly. They are guilty of superstition who consult, or advise others to consult magicians, cunning-men, or the like, to find what they have lost, or to know who has stolen their goods, or be informed of any secret. "The soul," says Almighty God, "that shall go aside after magicians, soothsayers, &c., I will set my face against that soul, and destroy it out of the midst of its people." (Lev. xx. 6.) "Above all things," says the good bishop St. Eligius, "I declare to you, and conjure you, not to observe the sacrilegious customs of the pagans, and that you go not to conjurers and wizards, to consult them about any infirmity or upon any account; because whosoever commits this wickedness, loses the effect of his baptism." (In vita ejus a St. Audoena, 1 2 c. 15.) And the first Council of Milan in part 1, chap. 10, after many other councils, orders those to be severely punished, who go to fortune-tellers, conjurers, or the like, and consult them upon any account, or advise, or encourage others to go to them; or, after they have advised with them, believe what they say.

Thirdly. Those are guilty of superstition, who pretend to foretell good or bad luck by omens, by the meeting of certain persons or creatures, by the flying or chattering of birds, and by the like vain observations, to judge of the success or miscarriage of their affairs, and thereupon are inclined to omit their business

then in hand. These St. Thomas (2. 2. Quæst. 95. a. 7.) declares to be superstitions, because things have no connexion with the future events which they pretend to foretell, and which generally depend on the free will of man. It is superstition then to believe that I shall have ill luck, if I stumble on the threshold as I go out of the house; if the magpie chatter before my window, or the crow croak from the house-top; if the first thing I meet be a toad, a snake, or the like; or if I meet a man with one eye, or that is sick, or lame; or if a hare crosses my way; or, when at table, if the salt falls towards one; or if I am solicitous about the number thirteen; when friends are walking, if a dog or a child run betwixt them; when they rise in the morning, if they put on the right shoe first, with a thousand such like. In fine, if they judge of a sick person's dying or living by the salt melting, or not melting, in his hand, and the like; such as practise, teach, give credit to, or are really concerned about these things, or such as these, are guilty of superstition, because these things have no power to foretell good or bad luck, neither from their own nature, nor from the institution of God: and therefore, says St. Thomas, it must be from the institution and discipline of the devil. And St. Augustin is of the same opinion: "these," says he, "have no language but as they are in league with the devil, through the presumption of credulous people: nevertheless they are full of pestilent curiosity, racking solicitude, and moral slavery." In l. 2. c. 10. Christ. de Doct.

"These, and such as these," says St. Chrysostom to the people of Antioch, "are the pomps of the devil. The observation of days, omens, forebodings, &c. You go out of your house," says he, "and you meet a man with one eye, and you cry it will be an unlucky day. Here's the pomp of the devil. It is not the meeting a man, but the living in sin, that makes the day unlucky. When you go abroad, take care of one thing, commit no sin, for it is only this that can undermine or prejudice you; without this the devil himself can do you no harm. What say you? You

see a man, and you cry, ill luck; and you see not the snare of the devil, which is doubtless ill luck; but you observe not the danger of it. Shall I add," says he, "what is still more ridiculous? If the first you meet be a maid, you cry, it will be a barren day; but if it be a person of ill repute, you then cry, it will be a lucky day. Here's the pomp of the devil; and what is his end in this, but to bring modesty into contempt, and lewdness into esteem?"

Fourthly. Those are guilty of superstition, who go to fortune-tellers or gipsies, to have their fortunes told, or to mathematicians, to have their nativities cast; accept what they tell them, and so govern their lives according to such predictions. Such as use vain means to know future events; who are to be their husbands, or what success they shall have; and to this end they use a hundred charms; as laying such a bough under their pillow, fasting such an eve, making dumb cakes, or watching such nights, and this to know in their sleep who they are to have; such as watch in the church porch, to know who will die that year in the parish; such as use the sieve and shears to find out things lost, who are the thieves, or what success this or that business will have, &c. Such as prick in fortune-books, or cast lots to know their destiny, or use any such means to know any future events. These, and such as these, have been condemned over and over again by the fathers, councils, and popes.

"It happens sometimes," says St. Augustin, "through the illusions and the deceit of the fallen angels, and by many superstitious means, that several things past, and to come, are told, and foretold, and do not happen otherwise than they are foretold; and when persons find that their observations hit, and come to pass, this heightens their curiosity, and entangles them more in the snares of a most pernicious error. Of this departing of a soul from God," says he, "the scripture is not silent, and does not deter us from such practices, by saying, those things will not happen as they are foretold; but although they tell you, and it

happens as they tell you, do not believe them." (L. 2. de Doct. Christ. c. 23. & c. 21, 22.) Though the image of the dead Samuel foretold to King Saul what was true, yet such sacrilegious practices are not less to be detested upon that account. And he concludes, that such arts as astrologers pretend to, are either trifling impertinences, or damnable superstitions, grounded upon wicked compacts between men and the devil; and therefore to be detested by all Christians.

I add only, that if to practice these superstitions, or charms be to put ourselves from under the providence of God, as St. Basil says; if it be to renounce our baptism, as St. Eligius affirms; if it be to entangle ourselves in the snares of the devil, as St. Chrysostom tells us; if it be to depart from God, and engage in a most pernicious error, as St. Augustin assures us; in fine, if these be an abomination to God, as the scripture affirms, (Deut. xiii.) what blessings can those expect upon their marriage, who make use of some of these, and go to the devil for a husband?

Fifthly. Those are guilty of superstition, who observe days, as if some were lucky, and some unlucky; and upon that account, begin or defer their business and affairs. This is evidently proved from the words of St. Paul: "You observe," says he, in his epistle to the Galatians, "days, and months, and times, and years; I am afraid of you, lest, perhaps, I have labored in vain among you." (Chap iv. 10, 11.) "Whereupon," says St. Chrysostom, in his homily against those that observed new moons: "It is the extremity of madness to expect that your affairs for the whole year should be successful, because you began them on such a day. Nay, it is not only madness, but an argument of a strange diabolical impulse, to attribute the prosperity of our life to the occurrence of a certain day, and not to our own care and industry. A day is not lucky or unlucky of its own nature, (for one day differs not from another,) but it becomes such by our industry, or our sloth; if you employ it in virtue, it will be a lucky day,

and merit a reward from God; if you spend it in wickedness, it will be an unlucky day, and deserves his anger and punishment."

"Many things would seem small sins," says St. Augustin, in his Enchiridion, "did not we know them from the testimony of scripture to be great ones." Who would have imagined how great a sin it is to observe days, and months, and years, as some observe them: who will or will not begin any business upon such days, such months, such years, because, through the superstitious opinion of vain men, some are called lucky, and some unlucky, did not we measure its greatness from the fear of the apostle? *I am afraid of you, lest, perhaps, I have labored in vain among you.* By these words he reprehends those who say, I will not go abroad to-day, because to-morrow will be the kalends, or such an unlucky day; or, I will go abroad to-day, because it is a lucky day, all will succeed with me, there is a prosperous constellation, the sun is in a good sign; I will make no bargains this month, because there is an unlucky star that rules this month; or, I will not plant my vineyard this year, because it is leap year, &c. These are condemned by many councils, particularly those of Bourdeaux, Milan, Rouen, the last laying an anathema upon such as observe days and hours, as if anything should succeed better or worse, on that account.

Those are guilty of this superstition, who will not begin a journey, or any business upon days that are reputed unlucky, and particularly that day of the week whereon the feast of the Holy Innocents falls that year. Those who will not marry on a Wednesday, or in May and August, because superstitious persons repute it unlucky. Those who will not pare their nails, or comb their hair, on Fridays, or wash linen on such and such days, lest some unlucky accident befal them. Who believe bread, baked on such days, will preserve cattle from diseases; or that eggs, laid on such days, will extinguish fire; or, if a grave be made on such a day in the week, many will die that year in the parish In fine, such as observe the feast of St. Paul's conversion, and

thereby judge of peace or war, plenty or scarcity, for the ensuing year; and a hundred such like contrivances, proceeding from the illusions of the devil, and spread abroad by the malice of his instruments.

Sixthly. Those are guilty of superstition, who make use of charms, words, figures, numbers, &c. to prevent or cure distempers either in man or beast; who cure the head-ache, pull out thorns, stop bleeding, and remove agues, &c. with certain words or prayers, not appointed by the church, which seem pious, yet are nothing but charms. "Philosophise as long as you please upon them," says St. Chrysostom, "and tell me that you call upon God, and do nothing else, and that the old woman you make use of is a Christian and a Catholic. I tell you it is idolatry, and a charm; and no doubt, sometimes the devil makes use of the appearance of piety, to hide his treachery, and give poison in honey." Hom. viii. in Ep. ad Col.

"Such medicines," says St. Augustin, "which consist of ligatures, or fillets, which physicians approve of, whether they be in prayers, or certain notes, which they call characters, or are to be hung or tied about the person that is infirm, are nothing but tricks of the devil, and compacts agreed upon between him and wicked men." L. ii. de Doct. Christ. c. 20.

Seventhly. They are guilty of superstition, who make use of any holy thing to produce an effect which it has no power to do, either from nature or from God, or from any blessing of the church, as St. Thomas teaches: "In all charms, (says he) or writings that are worn about us, we must consider whether or no there be anything in them that tends to the calling upon the devil, or contains any hard names wherein poison may lurk; or whether or no they promise any thing that is false; for, then doubtless, the effect cannot be from God, who cannot be the author of falsehood; or, if there be any thing vain and impertinent, intermixed with what is holy, or any character besides the sign of the cross, or any confidence be placed in the manner of

writing, or tying, or any other impertinence, that conduces not to the worship of God; for this is judged superstitious." Quæst. ii. q. 96. a. 4.

Hence we may conclude, that it is superstitious to carry about one the measure of the wound in our Saviour's side; if the person believes, that he shall gain all those effects that are promised by a condemned book, called *Manuale Præcationum,* wherein the following words are contained: "This is the measure of the wound in our Saviour's side, carried to Constantinople, to the Emperor Charles the Great, as a most precious relic, lest any enemy hurt him. So great is the virtue of it, that neither fire, nor water, nor wind, nor tempest, nor a lance, nor a sword, nor the devil, can hurt him, who either reads it himself, or causes it to be read, or carries it about with him. Besides, a woman in labor, shall not die the day she sees it, but shall be delivered immediately, and easily. Moreover, whosoever carries it about him, shall gain a victory over his enemy, and shall suffer no damage himself. Lastly, that day that any one reads it, he shall not die a sudden death."

Thus the devil transforms himself into an angel of light, and introduces his charms, under the cover of piety; to deceive and ruin easy and credulous persons, by putting them upon a vain security, and a treacherous presumption.

However, it is without doubt, very lawful to carry relics about us, or a cross, or St. John's gospel, the image of Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, or any of the saints, or other marks of piety, approved by the church; as the rosary and the scapular, provided it be done with a pious intention, and without the addition of any vain circumstances.

Nevertheless, it is superstition to believe that those that carry about them the rosary, or scapular, or such marks of piety, that they shall never be damned; or that, at the hour of their death, they shall certainly repent, and have the benefits of the sacraments, although they have neglected them all their lives. Cer-

tainly, this presumption of security comes not from God. Wherefore, "the council of Cambray, held in the year 1565, admonishes the faithful, that the vanity and superstition of those is abominable, who for certain promise themselves, that they shall not depart this life without penance and the sacraments, who have a devotion to this or that saint, who place a security in the things they carry about them: and that they shall certainly have the success they desire, and whatever else of this nature is made use of and believed. And in like manner also, that it is utterly to be disallowed if any one affirm, that by a certain number, or by any certain form of masses, or other prayers, certain and particular persons are always released out of purgatory."

These are the words of the council, to which I shall add nothing; for I have made it my business in this discourse, to collect what I would inform my reader of, from the Fathers and Councils; I only exhort you to the practice of solid piety, and not to put your whole confidence in the number or form of certain prayers, or in the saying of them so often upon such particular days. Place your confidence in God, and pray to him with an humble and contrite heart, with *attention*, *devotion*, and *perseverance;* and endeavor to gain, by the practice of virtue, what you ask in your prayers; and you may confidently hope to obtain, through the intercession of saints, what you so heartily ask.

The devotions of the rosary and the scapular are doubtless, good and commendable, and approved by the church; but to place a security of salvation in them, that is not warrantable.

Eighthly. To give credit to dreams, or to govern our actions by them, is superstitious, and frequently condemned in holy scripture; "Dreams lift up fools," says Ecclesiasticus; (xxxiv. 12.) "the man that giveth heed to lying visions, is like to him that catcheth at a shadow, and followeth after the wind." Again, "Deceitful divinations and lying omens, and the dreams of evil doers are vanity." And in the 7th verse, "Dreams have deceived many, and they have failed that have put their trust in them." It

is also expressly forbidden in Leviticus: "You shall not divine," says Almighty God, "nor observe dreams." (Chap. xix. 26.) If we have much ado to find out truth, and to foresee ordinary events, when we are awake, what hopes have we to do it when our reason is asleep? It is true, Almighty God has formerly spoken by dreams, and may do it again: but as this is not now usual, and so hard to distinguish when they come from God, from nature, constitution, fancy, or the illusions of the devil; that our general rule must be, not to mind dreams, nor the interpretation of them, delivered in idle books.

Ninthly. It is wicked and damnable to destroy one charm by another, or to go to any magicians, or such as they call white witches, and to make use of their art to destroy a charm. For this is to do evil, that good may follow, and to make use of the devil, to destroy the works of the devil. Yet if we, or our cattle, are bewitched, it is lawful to seek out the charm; and as the Roman Ritual says, to burn it if we find it. It is lawful also to go to the witch or enchanter, and to desire them, by fair means, or threats, or moderate severity, to remove or destroy the charms; but this is not doing an ill thing, but only forcing them to do a good one.

In fine, it is damnable to make use of any charm to make persons fall in love with them, or to do any damage to their neighbor, or his goods; and not only those that do these things are guilty, but also those that consent to the doing of them, and nothing can excuse them but an inculpable ignorance.

But you may tell me, dear Christians, that there are many secrets in nature, and wonderful effects proceed from natural causes, and particularly as to medicines; we should not therefore condemn them, because we do not understand them. This, it is true, cannot be denied; and therefore it ought to make us cautious in censuring too lightly our neighbor's practice, and also backward in using it ourselves till we understand it, that we may not run the hazard of using a charm instead of a remedy.

The holy Fathers were near the time of the heathens, and knew well their superstitious practices: what they censured, therefore, we have reason to condemn.

I conclude, therefore, with a short recapitulation of what I have said for the help of your memory.

We ought to adore nothing for God, nor with the honor due to God, but God himself, the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth; yet when we honor his saints, and what belongs to them, as their relics and pictures, with a religious but inferior honor, as his friends, we do not take from, but add to his honor, because it is on his account. We have our entire dependence upon him for all we have, and for all we hope; and therefore as our whole confidence is in him, so we ought to have recourse to him for all we want, through Jesus Christ our only Redeemer and Mediator, he having given us all imaginable encouragement in these his own words, "Whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." John xv. 16.

Yet, nevertheless, it is good and profitable to have recourse to the prayers of the saints, and to beg their intercession for us; because, as they are more acceptable to him, their prayers may be more powerful in our behalf: besides, God is willing sometimes to honor his saints, in granting our requests on their account, thus to move us to the imitation of those virtues, which have made them so agreeable to him

Thus, as it is our duty and interest to honor God and his saints, it is our ruin to have any commerce with the devil. "I would not that you should be made partakers with devils: you cannot drink the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of devils: you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils." 1 Cor. x. 20, 21.

Wherefore, you must not go to cunning men, or conjurers, or the like, to find what is lost, recover what is stolen, or to know what is to come; for this is to leave God, and to enter into

society with the devil: it is to violate your vow in baptism, and to renounce the providence of God.

You must not consult fortune-tellers, nor mathematicians, to know your destiny, or to have your nativity cast: nor must you use tricks or charms, to know future events; who is to be your husband or wife, or what trade or profession he will be of: these being usually damnable superstitions.

You ought not to regard what superstition terms good or bad omens, lucky and unlucky days, for these are relics of paganism, and the pomps and snares of the devil; as it is to observe dreams, and the vain interpretation of them; neither are you to use charms for medicines to cure diseases, either in man or beast. In fine, we must beware of the devil in all shapes, and never build an assurance of salvation upon any particular form of prayer. But herein you are entirely to depend on the mercy of God, and the merits of your Redeemer: and as St. Peter advises, "that by good works you may make sure your calling and election. For doing these things you shall not sin at any time For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Epist. ch. i. 10, 11.

DISCOURSE IV.

ON THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands to them that love me, and keep my commandments.—Exod. xx. 5, 6.

THIS is an appendix, where every word has its force, and though annexed to the first commandment, yet really belongs to them all, because it is an assignment of rewards and punishments:

reward to such as keep this law, and punishment to those that break it.

These are the great support of laws, these are what keep them in force, and men to their duty. The reward is large and great; it is large, as being extended to thousands, and all that love God, and keep his commandments. It is likewise great, as being no less than an everlasting life, (Matt. xix. 17.) an eternal crown, the kingdom of heaven itself. "If thou wilt enter into life," says Christ, "keep the commandments. And he that does the will of my Father that is in heaven, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xxv.) Again, in the Revelations, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. ii. 10, and iii. 21.

The punishment also is of great extent and truly terrible. It is of a great extent, because evil parents, who break God's law, transmit the punishment of their sins to their children, and the children of their children, even to the third and fourth generation. As to temporal punishment, we find that fulfilled in many examples, which the scripture mentions. It is likewise true as to an eternal punishment, in two cases: first, when children enter into the injustices of their parents; secondly, when they imitate their evil example. Thus, evil parents entail everlasting ruin upon the children of their own bowels. The punishment likewise is truly terrible; because it contains an eternal exclusion from God, and all that is good, and the being doomed to everlasting torments in fire and flame. "Every tree that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire," says the gospel. (Matt. iii. 10.) Again, "The wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting." (xxv. 46.) And this will be the fatal end of all those that hate God. What means this expression, *that hate God?* for few sinners think they hate God. The Holy Ghost makes use of this expression, to shew the grievousness of sin; for what can be more odious and detestable than to hate goodness itself? And this all sinners do; for as he

and only he, loves God, who keeps his commandments; so he that does not keep, but breaks his law, is truly said to hate God, at least in effect. As he that pawns his soul for his interest, does it as much damage as if he really hated it.

But I forgot two words that are very significant. God here tells us, that he is *mighty* and *jealous*. Sinners sometimes are but little moved with the terror of God's threats, and so frame, in their foolish fancies, many ways whereby to avoid his wrath, and escape the threatened punishment. But these vain projects will quickly vanish, when they consider his strength and power; so great, that nothing visible or invisible can resist it, and will soon cry out with holy David, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend into heaven thou art there; if I descend into hell thou art present. And I said, perhaps darkness shall cover me, and night shall be my light in my pleasures." (Psalm cxxxviii. 7, 8, 11.) Alas, nothing can secure them against his power and strength!

Nay, he is not only strong, but also jealous. This jealousy argues not any distrust or disturbance in the mind of God, but signifies such a love and concern for us, as to make him observe the least departing of a soul from him, and suffers not the smallest fault to pass unpunished; to obviate that blasphemous principle of libertines, who say, God is too great to mind the trivial concerns of men. Or, as they express themselves in Job: "What doth God know? and he judgeth as it were through a mist. The clouds are his covert, and he doth not consider our things, and he walketh about the poles of heaven." (Chap. xxii. 13, 14.) These foolish and wicked thoughts will vanish, when they consider his jealousy in his most calm and exact justice, who, as he is the spouse of our souls, requires our whole heart; and as he suffers not the least misapplied affection to pass unpunished; so he "destroys all that depart from him," (Psalm lxxii. 27.) as the Psalmist assures us.

Thus, in return, we ought to be exact in our duty, and

jealous of his service, as neither to mispend our time, nor misplace our affections. He has given us all we have, so he justly requires all from us. We cannot think to deceive him with words and promises, when our hearts and affections run another way, and after other objects. With these we cannot deceive a wise man, much less a jealous God. Our devotion therefore must be true and solid, and not in a set form of words, and bare promises, that satisfy a mere devotee, but come to no effectual resolution, no change, nor reformation of our hearts. This is what at present I design to exhort you to, and thereby conclude the explanation of the first commandment.

There is a true, and a false devotion; the one is regarded and rewarded by God, the other is rejected, and punished by him. But how must we know the one from the other? I tell you, all that devotion which the spirit of piety does not animate, is a false and treacherous devotion: all that devotion, which is not governed by a just subordination to greater duties, is treacherous and unprofitable. If you would have your devotion solid, and acceptable to God, let it be interior from your heart; and let it be governed according to reason, and the circumstances of your state. If false devotion regards principally the exterior, true devotion aims chiefly at the interior, and comes from the heart. If false devotion prefer works of supererogation before those of precept; true devotion goes quite otherwise, it always prefers duty before counsel.

I begin with the first, true devotion must be interior, and from our heart. There is much the same difference between true and false devotion, as there is between nature and art. Art is only concerned for the exterior. An expert carver, when he designs to make a statue, that may be a credit to him, aims to perfect nothing but what is exterior: he labors indeed about the head and arms, and endeavors to form an exact proportioned countenance; but he thinks neither of the brains, the arteries, the lungs, the liver, nor the heart; his whole aim being only to complete

what appears to the eye. But nature takes a contrary method; her labor and concern is about what is interior; her first care is, to form the heart, the brains, and the vitals, and leaves the exterior parts to the last, as being the least of her concern.

Thus, false devotion has much of art in it; it chiefly aims at the exterior of virtue; the eyes, the hands, and the countenance, are decently composed to deceive beholders. If they sigh at the right time, knock their breast, and, may be, let fall a tear, they are concerned for no more, though the heart, at the same time, remains insensible: and it happens sometimes, that those that kiss tenderly the feet of an insensible crucifix, abandon, without compassion, the living members of him that was crucified. Thus Judas, in appearance, was extremely charitable, whilst he reprehended pious Magdalen for the effusion of the ointment on our Saviour's feet: "This," says he, "might have been sold, for more than three hundred pence, and given to the poor;" (Mark xiv. 5.) but that was not from his heart, he had no compassion for them, but a prospect of interest for himself; it was not their wants, but his own covetousness, that moved his zeal. But true devotion takes another method; for, being convinced that all good, as well as all evil, comes from the heart, it begins with the interior: first, it regulates the understanding by faith, and an humble docility, to all the commands of God and his church; then it purifies the heart by a good intention, and endeavors to enkindle in it a sincere love of God and our neighbor. Thus, St. Mary Magdalen, before she made that small present of perfumes to our Saviour, so severely condemned by the unhappy apostle, before she sat down at table with Christ, she had purified her heart by a true and sincere repentance, and she had washed away the stains of her soul by a flood of tears; so that she deserved to hear, from the mouth of the Son of God, that many sins were pardoned her, because she had loved much; her devotion appeared not, till she had first formed and perfected it in her heart.

Mistake me not, I am far from condemning all exterior works

of devotion; but I would not have them barely exterior; I would have them appear then, and only then, when they are animated by the interior spirit of piety and devotion; I would have them first formed in, and then to come from the heart; for virtue, as Tertullian says, is not perfect, but when it is edifying. Now, it cannot be edifying, unless it appear; for, as the sun has light and heat, not for itself only, but to communicate them to us mortals below; so true virtue ought to have its light, "*that they may see your good works*," says our Saviour, "*and glorify your Father, who is in heaven:*" its heat, because proceeding from a heart animated and inflamed by charity, it may warm tepid, and even frozen hearts, into a zeal for what is their greater good, and only interest. I blame not therefore the exterior of virtue, but I would have it sanctified. I condemn not those actions that may be advantageous to us, and edifying to others; but, I assure you, they will never be regarded by God, nor profitable to us, unless they come really from the heart.

What is more monstrous in nature, than for a man to have in the exterior the simplicity of a dove, and interiorly the rapacity of a dog? the fleece of a lamb, and the malice of a wolf? to be a Cato, a man of moderation without, and a Nero within? To hear him speak of conscience, justice and lenity, &c. you could not but observe the meekness of a lamb, and the innocence of a dove; yet if you examine into his actions, you may find cruelty, oppressions, injustices, and revenge. Another, in appearance is meek, humble, charitable, and the like; but give him the least provocation, and you will see the heart. You will find him proud, passionate, envious, &c. Had not these persons contented themselves with the appearance of virtue, but laid the axe to the root, and labored to reform their lives and manners, and make it their endeavors to conquer their passions, to humble their pride, and check their envious and covetous humors, what progress might they have made in virtue? But, alas! they have deceived themselves, and done nothing God requires of them.

What is it God requires of you? It is your heart, dear Christians, it is your heart. He is a *jealous* God; for whatever you give, if you give not this, you give nothing; and if you give him this, after that you can refuse him nothing. This is the first thing he asks of you, "Son, give me thy heart." (Prov. xxiii. 26.) And when you forsake him to follow sin, he calls after you: "return," said he, "ye transgressors, to the heart." (Isa. xlvi. 8.) Again, when he encourages you to prayer, and to such a prayer as may be acceptable to him, he cries, faithful soul, pour forth thy heart before me. It is this, and only this, can make us agreeable to God. So David, in his addresses to God, relies not so much on the humiliations of his body, as those of his heart. "My soul," says he, "hath cleaved to the pavement, quicken thou me, according to thy word." (Psalm cxviii. 25.) He relies not on his sighs and tears only, but the sincere disposition of his heart. My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready, to do or suffer whatever you please.

Such ought to be the disposition of every true servant of God; the exterior of virtue ought to be the effect of the interior disposition of the soul. For it is the pious soul that is the throne of God, it is the soul that is the temple of the Holy Ghost, it is the soul that is the altar and sanctuary of Jesus Christ. It is the soul, in fine, the king of heaven reigns in and rules, when she entirely submits to his orders, and truly detests all that is displeasing to him. All exterior acts of devotion, therefore, to be good and acceptable to God, must proceed from, and be animated by, the like disposition in the soul. An example will make my meaning clear. When the pomegranite grows ripe, they say, the fruit within becoming red, gives the same tincture to the outside, and thus discovers without the color it has within. Thus, true devotion when it is full and perfected in the heart, it then runs over, diffuses itself to the exterior, and appears as it ought, in our dress, in our behavior, in our discourse, in our conversation, in our prayers, &c. all is uniform and the same, and animated by

the spirit of God, which as it is really in our hearts, cannot but appear in our behavior, whenever we proceed to action; so "for out of the abundance of the heart," says our Saviour, "the mouth speaks." Matt. xii. 34.

If our devotion be not in some measure like unto this, but altogether or chiefly exterior, it will be neither acceptable to God, nor profitable to us. Who tells us so? No less a person than Jesus Christ, speaking of alms-deeds: "you have given alms, but therein you have sought the praise of men; you have therein received your reward. Had you done it for my sake only, I would have placed it to your account, and reckoned with you for it; but go, your charity deserves no return from me; you desired to have men spectators and applauders; they have seen you, and they have praised you. There is your reward, expect none from your heavenly Father; what you desired, you have had; there is no reason you should have what you desired not." (Matt. vi. 2.) Thus, you may judge of the practice of all other virtues whatsoever, if they be not undertaken upon God's account, and our own real good, they will neither be acceptable to him, nor profitable to us.

Devotion is like our coin, some good, some bad; a false guinea has gold without, but some base metal within; it may deceive the ignorant and unwary for awhile, but it will not easily pass upon the cautious and wise: they will cry it down, and it will become useless for all commerce; whereas, the true coin is as good within as it is without, and all the same. Thus false devotion has a commendable exterior, but there is nothing answerable within, all there is counterfeit; it is true, it may draw the eyes and esteem of men; but in the sight of God, it will be found to be without weight, without merit, and without reward.

Hence proceeds the deficiency in the lives of Christians; so many days and hours, wherein they might have purchased heaven, yet vainly spent in fooleries and amusing in impertinences; for as they let them pass without regard, so another day they will be

found without reward. So many actions in themselves good and commendable, which, had they been undertaken upon God's account, they would have deserved an eternal recompense, but upon default of that, they will never be regarded by him. How many of these have no other motive but humor, vanity, pride, interest, custom, human respect, &c. Alas! how commendable soever they be in the eyes of men, they will be cast by as counterfeit by God, and we shall not find them at the day of judgment put down into the book of life.

Thus some, for example, are chaste, like the foolish virgins, not because it is a virtue acceptable to God, and makes them resemble the very angels, but out of apprehension what the world will say, or for fear their incontinence should appear by such marks, as might give them reason to blush all their lives after.

Another is patient, but why? for fear, should he carry things into extremity, he might disoblige others, and draw upon himself some considerable temporal damage. Another becomes sober and temperate, and why? not for love of virtue, but because he finds it will not hold out; so he is only endeavoring to repair the damage his extravagance has thrown him into. Another shows wonderful courage in bearing grief, pains and afflictions, and why? not to please God, but because he thinks it argues a mean spirit to appear dejected, and to sink under trouble. Some are charitable to such as are in trouble, and why? because they presume they will be in a condition to gratify them another time, &c. Does the gospel commend these virtues? No; they will not pass for current coin with God: this worldly motive in the heart, like baser metal within, takes off the value, and proves it counterfeit. So the scripture does not say, blessed are the poor, but blessed are the poor in spirit and affection; it does not say, blessed are those that suffer persecution, but blessed are they that suffer it for justice sake.

A servant that has a violent and passionate master, meets with

much difficulty in his service: but finding that, by bearing with his humor, he can make his fortune under him, this master may give him a hundred injurious words, and he will bear all without reply: this servant is meek and patient, you will say; but is it from his heart? Is it for God's sake, or his own interest? Is it out of duty, or because he has the prospect of temporal advantage in his eyes? This patience will never be rewarded by God. Another forgives an enemy that has abused him, he sees him, he salutes him, and talks with him as usually: but why? because he is pressed to it by those he depends upon, from whose displeasure he apprehends no small disadvantage, otherwise he would never have humbled himself to him, nor put up with what he has done.

These are only Pagan virtues, such as never will purchase heaven, or move God to pardon us.

What must you then do? I tell you, dear Christians, you must pardon for Christ's sake; your aim in what you do and suffer must be to please God, and not men; not to gain repute in the world, but an interest in heaven; let your duty, and not human respects, be the motive of your actions; walk like Abraham and the Patriarchs, in the presence of God, with a great simplicity of heart; and he who sees into your soul, will neither forget, nor omit to reward what you do or suffer upon his accouut. Then, if the fruit of your piety appear, that your heavenly Father may be glorified, the seed will always remain in the earth. Do not any thing merely for human praise, but labor for the glory of God, and the santification of your soul: serve God as he desires to be served, in spirit and in truth; and remember also to serve him with order. Let your devotion be interior from your heart, and let it be discreet and reasonable. If false devotion is so tied to works of supererogation, that it prefers them before those of precept, true piety prefers duty before counsel.

St. Augustin in his epistle to Januarius, lays down this principle: "Perfect justice," says he, "requires of us to prefer that

which is more valuable, before that which is of less moment." (Epist. 119. 1. 55.) From whence I infer that that devotion is indiscreet, which leads and moves a person to be exact and punctual in works of counsel, and to neglect those of one's state, and which duty requires of us.

Hence their devotion is very indiscreet and blameable, who give great charities to the poor, and to the church, and neglect to pay their debts, or to take care of their families; these ought to moderate their alms, and pay their creditors. Justice requires the one, but not the other. When you have discharged your bills, your liberality will be acceptable to God. "It is in vain," says the same St. Augustin, "to expect to be saved upon the account of your great donaries, or gifts, to the church, whilst your injustice cry out aloud against you. You may shew unto God the many poor you have relieved, and he will shew you the many poor you have made; you may present to him the numerous company of those you have fed and clothed, and he will shew you many more that you have cheated, robbed, and ruined." (Hom. 38, 50.) These some may repute charitable, but I am satisfied God will not. I am far from crying down alms-deeds, for I know nothing can be more agreeable to God, nor more powerful to atone for our sins; but, believe me, they will never be regarded, unless justice be satisfied.

Again, others are so addicted to some particular devotions, which are no ways of obligation, that they will sooner omit any duty than neglect them. Thus some, who think they are not able to fast two days in the week, together, will dispense with Friday, that is doubtless of obligation, to fast on Saturday, because it is part of the devotion of the scapular: this is to break a commandment to satisfy a devotion which is not of obligation; this is certainly to do evil, in hopes to save our souls; it is to run in the way to hell, to gain heaven.

Some are so zealous for their religion, that they will be sooner torn to pieces, than they will deny any point of faith: and yet

7609

they are extremely negligent in every Christian duty; they believe well, but they live ill. I cannot but admire the constancy of their faith; yet I cannot choose, but extremely blame the disorders of their lives. Alas! faith without good works will avail them nothing, it will never save them. To be punctual in the practice of one virtue, and negligent in the rest, is vain, as St. James assures us: "If any one of you," says he, "believes that he has religion, and yet bridles not his tongue, but seduces his own heart, the religion of this person is vain." (1 Epist. chap. 1. 26.) Thus some will pray much, and spend the rest of the day in abuseful language, calumny, and detraction. What ravage does this make in the heart they pretend to give to God? And yet, there are more of these than one imagines. Others will be punctual in reading good books on Sundays and holydays; and yet take no care to hear Mass scarce twice a year. These sure pretend to get to heaven in defiance of the commandments of God and his church. I cannot but say their reading is good, yet I am persuaded it does them little service, since it moves them not to the ordinary duties of a Catholic.

In fine, some spend many hours in prayer upon working days, and at the same time neglect the care of their children, their families, and many duties their state requires of them; this may be called devotion, but far from being agreeable to God. Shall I tell them not to pray at all? God forbid! this would be to encourage impiety; for prayer is a duty incumbent on every Christian; we ought daily to beg our daily bread; but it must be discreet, and proportioned to our time and circumstances. When I hear how many hours they spend in prayer, I am much edified at their piety; but when I understand how they neglect their children, family and business, I am scandalized at their omission.

The goodness of God has proportioned his graces to the circumstances he has placed us in; there are different graces for those who are retired out of the world, and those that remain in it; the one being engaged in a contemplative, and the other in

an active life: different graces also for the pastor, and the flock; for those who have the charge of families, and must work for their living, and those who have none, and are otherwise provided for. Now to be truly devout, and faithful in our duty to God, we must apply ourselves, and endeavor to make good use of the graces assigned to our state, and lay to heart chiefly the great business of our salvation.

There are duties belonging to us all as Christians, as Catholics, as pastors, as people, as masters, as servants, as husbands, as wives, as laborers, &c. And God, no doubt will give us grace to discharge each, and in each, in such a manner, as will be acceptable to him, if we make but good use of it: when this is done, there are many practices and devotions acceptable to heaven, and advantageous to us, whereby God will be much honored, and we may reap great fruit: these usually are not inconsistent; but whensoever they interfere, devotion must yield to duty, and the obligations of our state. Our great and main concern then ought to be, to discharge the obligations of God and his church, and our particular vocation, impose on us.

The scripture, (Prov. xxxi.) gives us an exact model of this, when it describes to us a good and virtuous wife, under the character of a strong woman, attributing to her four particular qualifications. She is a woman, says the Holy Ghost, that fears God, and would not offend him for any thing in the world; the first quality. She is a woman, who, by her virtue and good conduct, has gained that credit with her husband, that he entirely confides in her; the second quality. She is a woman who takes care of her family concerns, employs her servants, as well as herself, and refuses not to lay her hand to the work; the third quality. She is a woman, in fine, that retrenches from vanity and her pleasures to have wherewithal to relieve the poor; the fourth quality.

This is doing the will of God, and living up to our vocation,

and discharging those duties God has imposed, and we have taken upon us.

Call to mind, dear Christians, what I have said, and reflect, that the reward and punishment God promises, and threatens, to those that keep or break his commandments, are great and eternal, no less than heaven and hell; the promise is extended to thousands, and the threats even to the third and fourth generation. God is *mighty*, he can execute what he says, and doubtless he will be as good as his word. He is also *jealous;* as he observes every affection of our hearts, so he will not be put off with appearances; he will be served in spirit and truth interiorly from our hearts, as well as exteriorly in our behavior. If your virtue appear, let it be then, when it is the language of your heart, and proceeds from the spirit of piety: then your neighbor will be edified, your heavenly Father honored, and you shall never fail of a reward. What you do and suffer, do it, and suffer it for God's sake, and not out of vanity, interest, humor, or worldly respects; for these motives are like a canker, that eat out the heart of the best actions, and leave nothing but the husk, which can never please a jealous God. Never feign yourself better than you are; for that is to mind a false coin, that may be current for awhile amongst men, but will never pass in heaven. Serve God, therefore, from your heart, and serve him also with order; prefer the obligations God and his church, and your state, impose on you, before all works of supererogation; for to do otherwise is not to follow the spirit, but the phantom of piety. When your duty is over, the more works of supererogation that you perform, the greater reward you shall have in heaven.

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain.—Exod. xx. 7.

This, dear Christians, is the second commandment of God, and follows evidently, from the first: for if we truly serve, honor, and love God, we shall never name him without reverence; because we always speak with respect of those we honor and love. And this Almighty God takes notice of to us, by the mouth of his prophet Malachi: "The son honoreth his father, and the servant his master: If then I be a father, where is my honor?" (Mal. I. 6.) It is evident, then, that those do not truly honor and love God, who take his name in vain: for, when we consider, on the one side, the infinite holiness of God, how awful he is in majesty and glory, and how adorable in all that belongs to him; we cannot but apprehend that a great veneration is due to him from all his creatures; and that he ought not to be named without respect. And yet, on the other hand, is it not astonishing to hear the name of God, of Lord, of Jesus, or of Christ, to be the subject of every senseless acclamation, and impertinent outcry? To hear the name we will own to be sovereignly holy, brought in, upon all occasions, idly, unprofitably, without any reason or meaning; as if we meant to equal it with the meanest things in the world, and prostitute it to all that is senseless, ridiculous, or profane? Men usually reserve their best clothes for holydays; with how much more reason ought they to reserve this sacred name for their prayers and best devotions?

Now, if these are not without guilt, who thus take God's holy name in vain, that is, idly, and inconsiderately, without a due respect; how much more guilty are those, who by cursing, swearing, or blaspheming, notoriously abuse the holy and awful

name of God? And this, it is to be feared, often without repentance, because generally without amendment.

But, that you may thoroughly understand the obligation of this commandment, I must shew you, dear Christians, two things. First, what it commands; and secondly, what it forbids.

It commands all Christians, and others, to treat the name of God with honor and respect; and this we may do several ways First, when we publicly profess him to be our Lord, our God, and our Redeemer; when we defend his honor amongst blasphemers, and with courage check their insolence by a seasonable correction: thus we honor and confess Christ before men, for which he has promised a blessed return, assuring us that he will own us before his Father, who is in heaven.

Secondly. We honor God, when we hear his word with respect, meditate on it with devotion, and practice it with care. And thus we may be the teachers of others, who, seeing our piety, they also may glorify our heavenly Father. And this will likewise be a check to such as are glad when they have done evil, and rejoice in the worst of actions, as the scripture tells us. Prov. ii.

Thirdly. We reverence God's name, when we sing his praises, when we pray devoutly, or when we give him thanks for all his blessings, and whatever happens to us by his appointment, whether prosperous or adverse. Holy David is full of this in his Psalms, "Bless the Lord, O my soul! and let all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul! and never forget all he hath done for thee." (Ps. cii. 1, 2.) And this doubtless is most agreeable to him, when we bless his name, like holy Job, in our greatest grief, troubles, or afflictions. Thus also the Psalmist calls upon all: "Join with me," says he, "to magnify our Lord, and let us all together celebrate his holy name." Why "Because," says he, "I have sought the Lord, and he heard me and he delivered me from all my troubles." Ps. xxxiii. 5.

Fourthly. We honor God, when, in our greatest afflictions

we expect no deliverance from our own endeavors, but his help; when, in proportion to the distrust we have in our own strength, we rely on his assistance. Thus, "Call upon me," says he, "in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." (Ps. xlix. 15.) And thus David owned it, "For they got not the possession of the land by their own sword: neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand, and thy arm, and the light of thy countenance." Ps. xliii. 4.

Lastly. We honor God's name, when we swear by it in confirmation of the truth, as often as our own, our neighbor's, or the public good requires it. According to that of Deuteronomy, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt serve him only, and thou shalt swear by his name." (Ch. vi. 13.) There is certainly a strange perverseness in human nature; some persons are extremely concerned and apprehensive, when they are to take a lawful oath to God's honor, in defence of their neighbor's life or fortune. And yet they will make nothing of swearing when there is no necessity, when it is to God's high dishonor, and the prejudice of their own souls.

Now to make an oath lawful, there are three things required; to wit, truth, justice, and judgment. This Almighty God has declared to us by his prophet Jeremias, "Thou shalt swear, as the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in justice." Ch. iv. 2

First. Then, for our oath to be lawful, the thing we swear must be true; and he that swears must not only think and believe, but he must know it for certain to be true. So also when he promises anything upon oath, it must really be in his power, and he must really intend to perform it; and when the time comes, he must be as good as his word, or else he is perjured.

Secondly. For an oath to be lawful, it must be accompanied with justice, that is, what we swear must be just and lawful to be done; so those that promise anything that is dishonest, or threaten that which is unlawful, if they confirm their promises and threats with an oath, they commit a grievous sin by swearing,

and double it if they keep their oath. Thus Herod sinned by an unjust oath, promising his daughter whatever she asked; (Mark vi.) and highly increased it by giving her the head of St. John Baptist. And thus those Jews sinned by wicked threats, who, as we read in the scripture, (Acts xxiii.) swore they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed St. Paul.

Thirdly. For an oath to be lawful, it must have judgment for its companion: and this, that it may not be rash and inconsiderate, nor taken upon trivial occasions. Before we swear, we must consider the matter, with all its circumstances, whether it be of that moment as to require an oath; and herein we must be very cautious, and take care we be not moved to swear out of love or hatred, out of anger, fear, or any other disorderly passion; for these so bias or cloud the judgment, that persons, but too often upon that account, take very indiscreet oaths. So much prudence and discretion is required to an oath, that the canon law will not allow children before fourteen years of age to take an oath; presuming that, before that age they have not sufficient judgment to take an oath, with that respect and reverence that is due to God.

To make then an oath lawful, there is required truth, justice, and judgment. A false oath wants truth, an unjust and dishonest oath wants justice, a rash indiscreet oath wants judgment. Whensoever we swear with these three conditions, we honor God, and perform an act of virtue; when any of these are wanting, we dishonor God, and generally commit perjury. What is perjury? *It is to swear to a lie;* and this not only in a public, but in any discourse, and upon any account whatever. So often as you swear to a lie, so often you are perjured: though the thing you swear, and the occasion be but trivial, yet doubtless, the dishonor to God, in abusing his sacred truth, is extremely great. It is likewise perjury, when you swear what is unjust and unlawful to be done; because we swear to do what we are obliged not to do, or to do the contrary; here the falsehood is more in the actions

than in the words. When our oath is true and just, and wants only judgment, it is improperly perjury, and only then when persons run the hazard, and, through passion, expose themselves to swear false.

The Christian world always looked upon oaths to be sacred, and the most binding obligations upon earth: because, as we believe God to be the first and supreme truth, who can neither deceive, nor be any ways deceived, to whose eyes all things are clear and open, he being the searcher of hearts; so when men, who are subject to error, fraud, and deceit, would give the best and most warrantable assurance of what they say, they call upon God himself, and engage his sacred truth for what they say; and as not to believe God thus engaged, would be impious and wicked; so if anything can put an end to disputes, and gain credit, this ought to do it. Hence, it appears, in some manner, how injurious it must be to God, to let every passion vent itself in the abuse of God, and his sacred name.

But before I explain to you how this commandment is broke, I must observe to you, how many sorts of oaths there are. Though these are numerous, yet they are reduced to two kinds, an affirmative oath, and a promissory oath. An affirmative oath is, when we declare and swear something past or present to be true. A promissory oath is, when we promise under oath to do something for another. What we affirm must be true; what we promise we must perform, if we design not to be perjured. To an affirmative oath, is reduced an oath with a curse; as when they say, *May I never see God; May I sink into the ground; May I never stir from the place,* and the like, *if what I say be not true.* Or so, *God never help nor prosper me, if I do not perform what I promise,* &c. To a promissory oath is reduced a threatening oath, as when persons threaten upon oath to inflict this or that punishment upon their children, servants, or others.

Now, we swear, not only when we call God to witness, as in saying, *by God, before God, by Christ,* or his sacred wounds; or

when we say, *I swear that it is so*, or *I call God to witness*, or the like; but likewise we swear, when we call upon any created thing to witness, as the gospel, the cross, our Lady, or any of the saints, our faith, our life, or the like. It is true, these things of themselves give no strength or authority to an oath, but as the divine majesty really is, and appears in them, they have the same authority. Hence, these that swear by the gospel, swear by God, whose truth is contained and delivered therein: and thus the saints are the temples of God, who believed and propagated his truth; thus all created things belong to God as his creatures, and have a necessary relation to him that made them. Wherefore, our Saviour gives us this caution: "I say to you, not to swear at all; neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black; but let your speech be yea, yea,—no, no, and that which is over and above these, is of evil." Matt. v. 34, &c.

You sin against this commandment, first, when you forswear yourself; that is, when you swear to a lie. This cannot but be a great sin, because very contumelious to the divine majesty, who is truth itself. What can be more injurious to God, than for men to endeavor to make him palliate their knavery, to engage his sacred truth to patronize their lies, and support their falsehood? This Almighty God declares is to debase and defile his holy name. "Thou shalt not," says he, "swear falsely by my name, nor profane the name of thy God." (Levit. xix. 12.) St. Thomas gives another reason, to shew the greatness of this crime: whatsoever argues a great contempt of God, must be a grievous sin. Now, perjury shews a great contempt of God, therefore, it is a great sin. Here, by the bye, you may observe, that whoever forswears himself to the prejudice of his neighbor, is obliged to restitution, and to repair all damages occasioned by his perjury.

St. Augustin (Serm. 180, lib. 28, c. 6 and 7.) speaks of persons

in his time, who were afraid to forswear themselves by their own life, or the life of their children, because they knew what they swore by, they devoted and engaged to God, upon the truth and certainty of what they swore, and dreaded he would revenge himself upon that they thus engaged to him, if they swore false; but they had not that apprehension of perjury, when they forswore themselves by the name of God. Should you lay your hand upon your child's head, who has been an eye witness of what you have done, and say to your neighbor, by the life of this child I have not done it: the child trembling under your arms, yet dreading much more the divine vengeance, the arm of God, crying out, do not, father, do not undervalue my life, do not call upon God against me; you know you have done it; you know I have seen you do it, do not forswear yourself; I respect you as my father, but I reverence much more yours and my creator; this you would have a horror to do. But when you forswear yourself by the sacred name of God, because when you do it, you are going to forswear yourself, he does not cry out to you, Do not swear, you know you have done it, you know I have seen you do it, do not forswear yourself; you fear nothing. Because God does not cry out to you, I have seen you, think you, he has not seen you? Tell me where is he, who says I have been silent, I have been silent, but shall I always be silent? Perjured man! God has seen you, and he will revenge himself. Do not you apprehend your life in danger? No, say you, such a one forswore himself to me, and yet he lives. He forswore himself, and yet he lives; you are deceived, he lives not; had you but eyes to see into his soul, you would find, that though his body lives, his soul is dead; you would discover there a ghastly soul, the horrid carcase of a soul: though his body lives, his better part is dead, yes, dead to God.

This, methinks, is sufficient to give you a horror of this crime, and to make you dread the divine vengeance, as often as you are

tempted to forswear yourself. Now, let us consider how many ways a person may, and does forswear himself.

First. They forswear themselves, when they swear that to be true, which they know or believe to be false, because they swear to a lie; likewise he is perjured, who swears that which is really true, yet when he swears he thinks it is false, because he swears to what he thinks is a lie. He is also perjured, who swears rashly and inconsiderately to a thing, which he does not certainly know whether it be true or false; because he exposes himself to the danger of swearing to a lie.

Secondly. He is guilty of perjury, who promises any thing under oath, and at the same time does not intend to do it; or does not care to make good his oath, if the thing sworn to be then lawful and possible. The reason of the first part is this: who calls God to witness that he will do such a thing, and really intends not to do it, lies in his own heart, and swears to the lie. As to the second part, what we promise upon oath, we must take care to perform, otherwise it will be a lying promise, confirmed by an oath, and therefore perjury. How many tradesmen, buyers, and sellers, are guilty of this!

Thirdly. He is guilty of perjury, who promises to do a thing that is not in his power, nor likely to be at the time limited, if he confirms his promise with an oath. Thus, they are perjured who promise, under oath, to pay money on such a day, when in reality they have it not, nor are likely to have it by the time assigned. The like is to be said of all other things. The reason is, because they call God to witness, they will do what in all probability they are not likely to perform: Yet if they really had the money, but it happened to be stolen or lost, they are not forsworn, because this was an accident they could not foresee.

Fourthly. He sins grievously, who swears to do what is unlawful to be done, or is a hindrance of a greater good; and if he keeps his oath, he adds another sin to his perjury. Thus the Jews, I spoke of, sinned, who swore neither to eat nor drink till

they had killed St. Paul: Thus Herod sinned in keeping a rash oath, and giving the head of the great Baptist as the reward of his daughter's dancing. Thus those sin grievously, who swear to be revenged of their enemies, or to do any ill action: Thus those sin, who swear to break their children's necks, or the like, when they are untoward, and put them into a passion; when they swear to do them, their servants, or others any mischief; in fine, when they swear to do any thing that is dishonest or unlawful to be done: The reason of this is evident, because this is to engage God, as much as in them lies, in their wickedness, swearing by him to do what they are sure offends him. They swear by Christ they will beat such a one, by Christ they will kill them, or by Christ they will ruin them, &c. and having thus wickedly sworn, they think they must keep their oath. Is it possible that the impudence of man could ever have been so contumelious to God, as to imagine, that because they have sworn by Christ, they are obliged to do what highly offends him, and who will doubtless revenge it upon them another day? These are sins for want of justice. "He also sins grievously for want of judgment," as St. Thomas says, "who swears he will not do what is lawful, and a virtue to do." (2. 2. Quæst. 98, ad 3.) Thus they sin, who swear they will not be reconciled to their enemies; or that they will not fast, or pray, till such a time; that they will not give alms, or assist and relieve their friends in necessity, or that they will never speak to such a one, or that they will never do him a kindness, or the like. These sin grievously in swearing such oaths, yet they are not obliged to keep them; for in reality they are not the matter of an oath: Because we can never be bound to do evil, nor to do any thing that is more profitable to omit, or better to do the contrary.

Fifthly. They that swear false in jest, commit a mortal sin. This is evident out of St. Thomas: "He that forswears himself in jest," says he, "does not avoid an irreverence to God, but in some manner increases it, and therefore is not excused from a

mortal sin." (2. 2. Quæs. 98, ad 3.) He likewise that swears false, though in a trivial business, that is not a straw's matter whether true or false, commits the like crime: This is evident from the proposition condemned by Pope Innocent XI. which is this: "To call God to witness to a small lie is not so great an irreverence, that God can or will damn a man for it." This I say is condemned by the church, and therefore the contrary is true; he that swears to a trifling lie, commits so great an irreverence to God, that he justly deserves everlasting flames. And, alas! how many are there of these irreverences, these perjuries, in common discourse, amongst such as are accustomed to swear!

Sixthly. Those are guilty of perjury, who swear deceitfully to their neighbor, that is, without an intention to swear; or, when they swear, use equivocations or mental reservations to elude the force of the oath. This is evident from the condemnation of the contrary doctrine in several propositions, two of which are these: "If any one swear that he has not done a thing, which really he has done, understanding within himself something else than what he has done, or some other way from that whereby he did it, or some other additional circumstance, does not lie, nor is he guilty of perjury." This, I say, is condemned by the church: and therefore such a one both lies and is perjured. A second proposition condemned is this: "Upon a reasonable account it is lawful to swear without an intention of swearing, whether the thing sworn to be little or great: This is also condemned; therefore the contrary is doubtless true." Hence St. Thomas teaches, "That when the intention of him who swears, and him to whom he swears, is not the same; if this be occasioned by fraud and deceit in him that swears, the oath must be kept according to the usual meaning of the words, as he understands it to whom he swears." 2. 2. Quæst. 28. ad 3.

"The ears of men," says St. Gregory, "judge of words as they sound, but the divine judgments take them as they lie in

the heart, so men judge of the heart by words, but God judges of words by the heart." L. 26. de Mor. c. 7.

"There are learned men amongst them," says St. Augustin in his book against lying, speaking of persons in his time, "who assign rules and end, when they may, and when they may not be forsworn; O where are you, fountains of tears, to deplore this wickedness? What shall we do, where shall we hide ourselves from the anger of truth? Not only to take no care to avoid lies, but also are become so bold as to teach perjury." Chap. 18.

The royal prophet teaches us more simplicity: "Lord," says he, "who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest in thy holy hill?" (Psalm xiv. 1.) He answers: Who speaks truth from his heart, and in whose tongue there is no deceit—Who never deceives when he swears to his neighbor. And again, "Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place? The innocent in hands, and clean of heart, who hath not taken his soul in vain, nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbor." Ibid. xxiii. 3, 4.

Seventhly. Those cannot be excused from a great sin, who without necessity, or any just reason, swear rashly and inconsiderately upon every small occasion, out of an evil custom, though they take some care never to swear what is false or unjust. These, though they neither deceive their neighbor, nor design any evil, so offend not usually for want of truth or justice, but for want of judgment; the third condition required to make an oath lawful.

They sin for want of prudence, swearing without necessity or their neighbor's good: they sin for want of reverence and piety towards God, whose sacred name they call upon to witness every trivial business: and, above all, they sin, in the hazard they run of perjury, who frequently swearing, are doubtless out of human frailty exposed to swear false, and out of passion to swear what is unjust.

In telling an ordinary story, or in common discourse, how hard it is to keep exactly to truth! how frequently do they add, or diminish some circumstance, to give the story a better air, to make it more pleasant and agreeable, and to go off the better! And yet, if they swear to the truth of it, as related by them, they are doubtless perjured, because they swear to a lie.

Besides, how dark is man's understanding, and how often deceived by appearances! how often, upon slight grounds, does he take that to be true, which, upon a serious and careful examination, he finds to be false or very doubtful! Now when he swears to it, does not he swear to a lie?

In fine, in a business that is so common in the world, and so dangerous to our salvation, let us observe what the scripture says of it: "Let not thy mouth be accustomed to swearing," says Almighty God by the mouth of his prophet Ecclesiasticus, "For in it there are many falls." (Eccles. xxiii. 9.) A man that swears much shall be filled with iniquity, and the plague or sorrow shall not depart from his house; and if he deceive, his sin shall be upon him; and if dissemble, he sins doubly; and if he swear in vain, he shall not be justified; for his house shall be filled with retribution; that is, God's judgments shall fall upon him, and his house, or family.

You see, dear Christians, that the scripture says there are many hazards in swearing; and this you cannot but be sensible of, if you have observed what I have said; and as they are filled with iniquity, so you see God reserves his punishments for them; and doubly to those who deceive and dissemble when they swear, because they sin doubly.

But what follows is very terrible; "The speech that sweareth much, shall make the hair of the head stand upright; and its irreverence shall make one stop his ears," says the Holy Ghost. (Eccles. xxvii. 15.) Swearers! can Almighty God use expressions more forcible, or more terrible to give you an horror of this crime, of this irreverence and contempt of him? What is past

you cannot recall; all you can do, is carefully to own your fault, repent from your heart, and to amend in earnest.

And, for a remedy of this vice, take the counsel of St. James: "My brethren," says he, "above all things, swear not, neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath; but let your speech be, yea, yea—no, no, that you fall not under judgment." (James v. 12.) It is much easier not to swear at all, than to observe all the conditions that make an oath lawful; as truth, justice, and judgment. This is also the advice St. Augustin took, and he prescribes it to others. What wrought a conversion in him, by the grace of God, may do it in you.

"What is it," says he, "that this apostle means, when he says, do not swear at all; but that we must lay this advice to heart, and set a double watch over ourselves, that we may never swear. The time was, when I was much given to swearing, and involved in that dangerous and wicked habit; but I tell you, since the time I began to serve God, and saw the great evil there was in perjury, I was struck with a fear of it; this fear bridled the inveterate habit; being bridled, it was restrained; being restrained, it languished, and languishing died; and a good custom succeeded a bad one." (L. 28.) Christ tells us, our discourse must be yea, yea—no, no, and what is more than this is of evil; but the detestable custom of the world runs another way. You swear, when we can believe you without an oath; you swear, when no one requires an oath of you; you swear, when those that are by tremble to hear you; you swear and make no end of swearing; how can you then escape forswearing? Above all things, therefore, do not swear; be watchful over this vice above all others; the greater your habit is, the greater must be your care: the more inveterate the custom, the greater diligence you must use; here, here, you must double your guard. Did you offend by your hands, you might with more ease restrain your arm; or did your feet run to evil, sloth sometimes would stop their course; but the tongue is easily moved, and when once in motion, soon

slips, and therefore you must have a double watch over it; believe me, you will thus watch over it, if you fear God; and you will fear God, if you call to mind that you are a Christian.

You will tell me, you have had a long habit, and you cannot overcome it. This is a sad plea—the older your habit, the more numerous your sins; and therefore had you any sense of salvation, you would tremble at this excuse; you would see that so far from justifying you, it condemns you the more. You cannot overcome it. Why? because your endeavors are but weak, and I fear they are seldom in earnest. St. Augustin had as ill a habit as you, and he overcame it; and doubtless so would you, had you but as great a sense of God's honor, and as much concern for your soul. But—you cannot overcome it. This, I am persuaded, is so far from being true, that you seldom use any oaths and curses in the presence of your betters, or any person you have a respect for, or has any authority over you: now had you as much respect for God, as you have for them; had he as much awe over you, you would overcome it: for he, no doubt, is always present, and has his eye upon you, and considers the irreverence. When you have this weighty, this serious reflection alone in your chamber, and find you do that in regard to men, which you do not in respect to God; you will clearly see, whether this excuse will justify you, when you come to appear at the great tribunal of God. Infallibly one day you be called, and you must appear, to give an account of every idle word, of every time you took God's name in vain, but much more of every sinful oath by which you have scandalized your neighbor, and defiled the sacred name of God; and this, it may be, without repentance, because without amendment.

Consider how often you have sworn by God, by Christ, by his sacred wounds, the price of your redemption, and that you have continued these irreverences even to this day: if you do not amend, what can you expect from God, who is to be your judge, and will revenge his own cause, his abused honor. He says, I

have been silent, but shall I always be silent? No; he will then speak loud; he will then lay open your guilty consciences, and judge all your irreverences and perjuries, by which you have dishonored that name, that sacred name, to which the whole creation ought to pay respect, to which every knee ought to bow in heaven, on earth, and in hell itself. The very devils, says the scripture, believe and tremble at his name; and you, bold swearer! how often have you abused it, and never trembled yet!

Think, dear Christians, on what I have said, and from this time resolve to amend: begin now at least to sanctify that name, by your prayers and tears, and the fruits of a repenting heart, which you have so often dishonored by taking it in vain, or swearing rashly by it, or, what is worst of all, by perjury, by swearing that which you knew or doubted to be false; by swearing what was unjust, and not lawful to be done; by swearing to perform what you knew, or feared was not in your power to do; or by not performing what you could and swore to perform; or, in fine, by swearing treacherously to your neighbor, deceiving him by your false oaths, and dishonoring God by your rash ones. Consider how grievously these offend him, and then resolve to neglect no means, till you have conquered this evil habit Take the advice the Holy Ghost gives you, *Swear not at all;* implore the assistance of heaven, and use your own endeavors; avoid the occasions, viz. passion, ill company, gaming, and drinking, and be sure to add your prayers and tears; and if these will not do, add even fasting and sackcloth; this I am sure will do, if you have a true sense of God's honor, and seek heaven in earnest.

DISCOURSE II.

ON THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain.—Exod. xx. 7.

In the last discourse upon this commandment, I laid before you the dreadful evils of swearing and forswearing, and shewed you how you was perjured: first, whenever you swear to a lie, upon any account; secondly, when you swear to do, or omit, what is unlawful to be done, or omitted; thirdly, when you keep not your word given upon oath; fourthly, when you swear rashly and inconsiderately, exposing yourself through frailty or passion, to swear what was unjust or untrue; fifthly, how you by customary swearing abuse the holy and awful name of God; that name, which the angels adore, and rejoice to adore; that name, which the very devils stand in awe of, and tremble to hear; that name, which all good Christians respect, praise, and bless; that name, wherein is placed all the hopes of our salvation: "There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved:" (Acts iv. 12.) that name, in fine, which, whenever we hear it, ought to raise in our hearts an awful reverence and respect. And yet, alas! how is it by careless Christians brought into contempt, being made the subject of every silly exclamation! And what is much worse, how it is wickedly profaned by swearing, abused and defiled by perjury! And yet these call themselves Christians, expect blessings, and hope for salvation in the name they daily abuse, without endeavoring to change, or striving to amend.

But this commandment, dear Christians, is not only broke by taking God's name in vain, by evil oaths and perjury; but also, by breaking our vows to God, by blasphemy and cursing. These

I design to explain, and to lay before you some considerations, to give you a true detestation of these crimes.

First. We break this commandment by making evil and unlawful vows, or by breaking such as are good and lawful. What is a vow? It is a promise made to God to do something that is good, or to abstain from something that is evil. A vow therefore differs from a resolution in this; a resolution is only a real design to do what we judge to be for our good, and agreeable to God; or to abstain from what we know to be evil, or dangerous to our souls: but to vow, is to put an obligation on, and to engage ourselves to God to do something that is to his great honor and our advantage, or to abstain from what is amiss, or dangerous to our souls. We must distinguish them, by the intention we had at the time, when we made a resolution or a vow.

There is also a great difference between a promise made to God, and a promise made to man, though both oblige in conscience. When we promise to men, it is for their advantage, and thereupon usually accepted; when we promise to God, it is for our own advantage, and as such God always accepts it, and therefore, we are always obliged to perform it, and that under mortal sin. For these are the express words of God: "When thou hast made a vow to the Lord thy God, thou shalt not delay to pay it; because the Lord thy God will require it; and if thou delay, it shall be imputed to thee for a sin." (Deut. xxiii. 21.) And again, "If thou hast vowed anything to God, defer not to pay it; for an unfaithful and foolish promise displeaseth him, but whatsoever thou hast vowed, pay it: it is much better not to vow, than after a vow, not to perform the things promised." (Eccles. v. 3. 4.) And St. Paul assures us, that such widows as marry after they have made a vow of chastity, have damnation, because they have broke their first faith; that is, their promise to God. The reason also is evident; for what we promise to man, no douht, we are obliged in conscience to perform, much more than what we promise to God. It is true, before we make a vow, we are at

our liberty to do or omit many things that are not otherways of obligation; but when we have once engaged ourselves by promise it is then no more indifferent, but our duty; and as often as we break it, so often we commit a grievous sin. And thus persons inconsiderately entangle themselves in many great difficulties Therefore, I advise all, never to make a vow without the advice of their director.

Secondly. This commandment is broken by blasphemy. What is blasphemy? It is to speak evil of God, or his saints. And this may be done several ways: First—When we deny to God what truly belongs to him; as when persons are oppressed by the wicked and the powerful, to cry, there is no Providence, God takes no care of me; that he regards not human affairs, and minds not what we do, &c. Secondly—When we attribute that to God which is injurious to him, as to say, that he is unjust, that he is cruel, that he is the author of sin; or that he cannot help or assist us, that he cannot hinder or prevent such and such evils, or that we can do what we please without his grace or assistance, &c. Thirdly—When we speak of God with contempt, as the Jews did to our Saviour, "Vah! thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save thy ownself; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." (Matt. xxvii. 40.) Fourthly—By wishing there was no God, or that he did not know our sins, or could not punish them. Fifthly—By cursing God or his saints. Sixthly—Through an excess of flattery, to attribute that to creatures which belongs only to God, or to call them Gods, and say they are divine, &c. Seventhly—By speaking irreverently of our blessed lady, or any of the blessed saints in heaven. Blasphemy is so detestable a sin, that I need not use any arguments to dissuade you from it, the very naming of it is sufficient to give you a horror.

Thirdly. This commandment is broken by cursing. What is a curse? "It is to wish evil to our neighbor, ourselves, or to any of God's creatures." Now, the greater evil we wish, the greater

sin we commit. "Bless those that persecute you," says St. Paul, "bless them and do not curse them." (Rom. xii. 14.) And he gives us a weighty reason, "Do not deceive yourselves," says he, "neither drunkards, cursers, nor extortioners, shall possess the kingdom of heaven." 1 Cor. vi. 10.

Consider then, when you curse your neighbor, you wish some evil to him, and if you wish it from your heart, as it happens but too often, you commit as great a sin in a manner, as if the evil you ineffectually wish did fall upon him. You wish the devil had him, that he may fetch him, that he may be damned, that he may rot, that the plague may seize him, &c. Every one appropriates such and such particular oaths and curses to himself; and therefore as many of them as there are evils in the world, we may wish to our neighbor.

Now should the devil by the permission of God, carry away the person you wish to him, what an horror would you have of your crime! sure you would never more be at ease, you would never more enjoy yourself. Men that have committed murder, though their crime be secret, seldom enjoy any peace in their minds, after such wicked actions. Innocent blood lies on their consciences, it distracts them by day, and haunts them by night; it persecutes them on earth, and cries to heaven for vengeance; but how much greater is their crime, who wish them not only murdered but damned too? the greatest, nay, the extremity of all evils.

That you may clearly and thoroughly comprehend what I say, you must know that all sin is committed in the heart; that is, in the will and in the soul; and just as it lies there, so it is in the sight of God. The exterior actions in all sins, is only the execution of what is already consented to, and completed in the will. Thus, he that raises up his arm to kill his enemy, is guilty of murder before God, though his enemy, by accident, avoids the stroke, and comes to no harm. Thus, "whosoever shall look on a woman, to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with

her in his heart." (Matt. v. 28.) Thus, he that goes about to steal, or commit any injustice, though he be discovered and prevented, is really guilty of theft and injustice. Thus, he that out of sloth, resolves not to hear Mass upon a day of obligation, commits a mortal sin of omission, though afterwards he repents, and hears Mass; and the like of all other sins whatsoever. For whenever we really consent by our will to any evil, we, that very moment, become guilty of it; and the greater the evil, the greater the crime; the whole essential malice of sin consisting in the will, the exterior action adds only an accidental malice; in this all divines agree.

It is true many great inconveniences attend the action, which do not follow the thought, yet all are consented to when we consent to the thought; and though we appear more innocent before men, we are really guilty in the sight of God, the searcher of hearts.

Under this consideration curses appear extremely black; it is true; and yet they appear in their own shape, and just as they are in the eyes of God. When in your passion then you wish a person at the devil, you wish him murdered, both body and soul; the very extremity of all misery in this life and the next. If you wish that he may rot, that he may be hanged, that he may never prosper, &c. These, as they are less evils, they are less sins; yet you must measure the greatness of your fault from the greatness of the evil you heartily wish, did it really fall upon him.

But you will tell me, those you wish to the devil, are neither murdered nor damned, nor do they come to any harm. No, no more do those you design to murder, if they escape. But, believe me, this is not for want of good will in you, but want of power; you cannot, and God will not execute your detestable wishes. However, the curse falls somewhere, if not on them you curse, doubtless upon your own head, according to that of the wise man: "As a bird flying to other places, and a sparrow

going here or there; so a curse uttered without cause shall come upon a man." Prov. xxvi. 2.

But you will tell me, you curse in passion only, and are sorry for it as soon as that is over. This is so far from excusing the fault, that it generally increases it; for when you curse upon a provocation, and in a passion, it usually at that time, comes from your heart; forasmuch as passion lessens free will, so much it increases the inclination to, and the desire of the evil. Men, when they fall out, and kill one another, it is usually in passion, yet this excuses them not from the guilt of murder; so it excuses you not from the malice of your curses, but makes you more guilty. One fault is never a good plea for another. Passion, no doubt is a fault; we ought to master it by patience and humility, and the more when we find it attended with such ill consequences, as swearing or cursing, &c.

You will tell me, in fine, you mean no harm when you curse your enemies, or those that provoke you. It may be not, when the passion is over; but whilst anger and indignation overrule reason, they carry the heart with them. Did not our own experience teach this, our Saviour's words would be a sufficient testimony: "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh," says Christ. Matt. xii. 34.

Besides, did curses mean no harm, why should St. Paul exclude them the kingdom of heaven? "Brethren," says he, "do not mistake yourselves, neither drunkards, nor extortioners, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."

If they mean no harm, why does holy David say of them, "Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they acted deceitfully; the poison of asps is under their lips; their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." Psalm xiii. 3.

If they mean no harm, why does St. Peter forbid them, "To return evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing; for unto this are you called, that you may inherit a blessing." 1 Epist. iii. 9.

Hence, we may conclude, that those who lie under the habit of cursing, lie under the guilt of a very great and scandalous sin, and cannot hope to enter into the kingdom of heaven, unless they labor in earnest to overcome it. But you will ask, if a person curse another only in jest, is he guilty of a great sin? No; because he does not do it from his heart. Yet, let me tell you, that a custom of this cannot but be very sinful, because the same expressions, which he uses in a joking way, will certainly occur to him in his anger, and then they will come from his heart.

Again, if a curse comes out before we are aware of it, without any reflection, do we then offend God considerably? The answer to this depends upon the present disposition of our souls. If these curses, which break out before we think of them, be the effect of an ill custom, which we truly desire, and labor to overcome, they are not sins, because they are neither voluntary in themselves, nor in their cause. But then, how watchful must you be, and what pains must you take, to give proof of your being in earnest, and to have any security of your not being guilty! But the contrary is to be said of those who do not labor to overcome their evil habits; for though these evil wishes, which break out of a sudden, are not voluntary in themselves, yet they are voluntary in their cause, which you do not heartily endeavor to remove; for he that wills the cause, wills the effect that follows. And thereupon you are guilty in the sight of God the effects of whose anger you will find another day, in the severe punishment of your sins.

Hence you see the grievousness of this sin: and those persons, who upon some provocation, disappointment, ill usage, anger, passion, or the like, break into execrations and evil wishes, as they usually do it with too much reflection, offend God in that degree, and in a manner as much as if the evil they heartily wished, did really fall upon them, provided they think what the words mean.

Measure then, dear Christians, if you can the number and grievousness of their sins, who have been long accustomed tc this evil habit. What a heavy load must lie on their consciences! Sure though I should not advise them, the consideration of their own good, and the sense they have of another world, would be a powerful motive to them, to neglect no means, nor ever give any rest to their endeavors, till they have mastered, and broke themselves of this evil custom, so provoking to heaven, and so injurious to their own souls. However, I will add one or two considerations, that they may be ready at hand to give a check to your passions, when they are ready to break into curses, or blasphemies.

Consider then, first, when you curse, you wish evil to those who are created to the image of God, as well as you are; you wish evil to those who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, as well as you are: you wish evil to those whom God has loved, and loved to that degree, as even to give his only son for them. Think, and think seriously, how it offends him to hear you wish so much evil to those he has designed so much good; to hear you wish damnation to those for whose salvation he has spared nothing; no, not the life of his only son. How must he take this at your hands, from whom he has reason to expect another return, upon account of the many favors and blessings he has continually heaped upon you, even to this very day? Sinner! if he spares you in this life, think what a reckoning you will have, when you, and those you have cursed appear at his great tribunal! Will not his anger rise against you, in proportion to the love he bears them? And how great this is, the death of his only Son is too clear a proof.

Secondly. When you curse your cattle, those of your neighbor, or any other thing, do not you curse your own blessings, such as the pure goodness of God has mercifully bestowed upon you? Should God hear your evil wishes; should your cattle rot upon the place; should the plague take them, should the devil fetch

them, according to your desire, what would become of you? You would be ruined, you would be beggars. Is not this to tempt God to punish you? What a strange depravation must there be in that heart, that thus abuses, not only God's creatures, but even then when they are his own blessings, and he would be undone without them? Is not this base and unworthy over and above the wickedness? Is not this enough to stop the kind and liberal hand of God, to turn his heart from you, and to send you down instead of blessings, the just punishment of your curses? Would not you do so? Would you not hold your hand when you found your liberality abused, and even turned to the damage of the ungrateful receiver, as well as your own dishonor? Can you then in reason expect any other from God? Do not you deserve to be paid in your own coin?

Now reflect how frequent these curses are with you, how you discharge them upon every occasion; you seldom drive your team but, upon any accident, a peal of curses falls upon your cattle, though it may be your own negligence has been the occasion. You seldom plough your ground, but you sow it with curses, as well as seed. What a crop can you expect? Will not the curses grow up with the corn, and draw God's anger upon you, instead of his blessing, in the following harvest? I wonder not your crops often fail, that your business succeeds ill; I am not at all surprised when I hear a great part of your corn is blasted, mildewed, or laid by storms, &c. These are the scourges of God, and the fruits of your evil wishes, which, if they do not always grow up with your corn here, I am sure they will rise in judgment against you hereafter.

Thirdly. Consider the wickedness of this sin of cursing above all others; it proceeds from pure malice; it wants the usual motives of sin, viz. profit or pleasure. Some, it is true, are moved to wickedness, but in hopes of interest, or some considerable gain; but what is there to be got by cursing? Others are drawn into sin, but it is by the love of pleasure; but what

satisfaction is there in cursing? There is not so much as the vain pleasure of revenge; for your curses fall, not upon your enemies, but upon your own head, and draw the wrath of God, not upon your neighbor, but yourself. Certainly it is a preposterous sort of revenge; because another has done an injury, I will do myself a greater; because another has used me ill, I will ruin my own soul. And yet this is what you do, when, upon any provocation, you curse one another; for herein, no doubt, it is only God you provoke and yourself you injure.

And this is what they likewise do, though in a more grievous manner, who blaspheme God; they are neither charmed by pleasure, nor over-ruled by interest, but prompted by pure malice, to this wickedness. In other sins they have no such evil designs, their aim is not so much to offend God, as to gratify their corrupt inclinations. It is true, they cannot have the one without the other; so they chose rather to offend God than want their satisfactions. This, no doubt, argues a great corruption of the heart; but much inferior to those who blaspheme; they have no worldly charms to allure them, but sin for the sake of sinning; they boldly and wilfully abuse their Lord and God; yes, the Lord of heaven and earth; yes, the God on whom their lives, death, and eternity depend; yes, the God by whom they live and subsist, and from whom they have all they have, and all they hope. What an ingratitude, what a profound corruption must lie in their hearts, to be thus wicked without the least motive of pleasure or profit!

Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History, tells us, how St. Polycarp, being condemned to most cruel torments, was promised to be released, if he would but curse and blaspheme God. He answered the tyrant, I have served Christ these fourscore and six years, and I have received nothing but blessings from him, why shall I curse him? In all my life he has never done me an injury; but, on the contrary, he has bestowed upon me infinite favors and graces, why should I commit this wickedness? Sinner!

think upon the worthy answer of so holy a bishop, and so great a martyr; and you, who swear, and curse, and blaspheme, think upon it. What has God done to you, that you so wickedly offend him! Wherein has he hurt you, that you thus abuse him? Has he not blessed you all your life; has he not bestowed a thousand favors on you? For which of these do you abuse him?

This is our Saviour's own expostulation to the Jews, who stood with stones in their hands ready to fling at him: "Many good works I have shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me." (John x. 32.) For which of these do you fling your curses at me? Ungrateful and unnatural creatures! Is it for this that I have created you? Have I preserved you, to this very moment, to fly in my face? Is this the return you make for the many sins I have pardoned you? Is this your gratitude for my having drawn you out of the jaws of hell, and so often held my hand to stop you when you were falling into it? Do you thus answer the many favors and blessings I have bestowed upon you? For which of these do you curse me, or my creatures? If, dear Christians, you are guilty of cursing, swearing, or blaspheming, think on this, and think seriously on it whilst you have time to amend, and prevent the future anger of your God.

Lastly. Consider and reflect, that cursing, swearing, and blaspheming, is the only employment of the devils, and the damned; this is their proper sin. They are doomed to a fixed state of misery, unchangeable torments, so, out of pure malice, they are hurried to this ineffectual revenge, and continually curse and blaspheme the name of God. For thus St. John describes them in the Revelations: "It is an obscure place," says he, "it is the region of darkness; here they bite their tongues for pain, and blaspheme the God of Heaven through their grief and torments." Chap. xvi.

Yes; this always has been, now is, and ever will be, their continual language and constant employment; whilst the blessed

in heaven enjoy calm and settled happiness, and bless and praise his holy name for ever and ever.

O hell! how detestable art thou through the innumerable torments that oppress those that lie chained in thy dungeons! Yet, how much more detestable art thou through the innumerable cursers and blasphemers who fill thy fiery cauldrons!

Hell! hell! how terrible soever thou art, thou wouldst appear with much less horror, did thy inhabitants praise and bless the name of God: but, alas! over and above all their torments, they never cease to curse and blaspheme; curse themselves, and others, and blaspheme the holy name of God. Cursers! you who habituate yourselves to this detestable practice, what think you of your present state? and what judge you of your future condition? Yours is not the language of the blessed, it will never fit you for heaven; but it is the language of the damned, and qualifies you for the kingdom of darkness. Do not you now join with them, do not you follow their ways, do not you thus enter into the noviceship of hell; yours and theirs is the same language; yours and theirs is the same employment. Whatever you think of yourselves, you surely belong to that dark region; your very speech betrays you.

Nay, in some manner you seem worse than they; they curse in the midst of torments and despair, under the weight of insuperable miseries, and the comfortless prospect of an endless eternity. But you curse under the blessings of heaven, under the favors of a kind and merciful God. Nay, you curse the very blessings of God, and abuse his name, whilst he is pouring favors upon you; you abuse his name, whilst he, who might have long since sent you to your deserved hell, still mercifully awaits your amendment.

Enter into yourselves, dear Christians, and see what a share you have of this detestable vice, then raise in your hearts, from what I have said, a horror of it. Change your language now betimes, if you design not to keep it for ever. You see how

grievous a sin it is to curse your neighbor, your cattle, or any of God's creatures; and though your detestable wishes reach not them, they certainly fall on your own heads.

I cannot but persuade myself, had you, in your younger days, really considered the enormity of this sin, you would ever have let yourselves run into so wicked a habit. You would have sooner cut out your tongues, than have employed them so often in abusing your God and his creatures. Those tongues, that were given you to bless and praise his holy name, and to return your daily thanks for his benefits, you would never have used them to villify both, and then too, even when you found your own ruin in your evil wishes.

For the future then be watchful, and carefully watchful, over yourselves, your children, and your servants; never suffer such wickedness to grow up in them; never let this crime pass unpunished. Thus, you may, in some measure, atone for your own crimes, and by preventing evil in others, in some degree, satisfy for your own. Let not the language of the devils and the damned be your discourse; it is but too ominous a resemblance of your future state. Use your tongues for the end they were given you, to praise your God, and to return him thanks for all his blessings; to comfort and defend your neighbor. Thus, you may please the one, and assist the other, and both enjoy him in his heavenly kingdom.

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day. Six days shalt thou labor, and shalt do all thy works; but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, thou shalt do no work on it, &c.—Exod. xx. 8, &c.

SABBATH is a Hebrew word, and signifies cessation or rest from labor; and this must be so rigorously observed, that neither

you, nor your children, men nor maids, domestics nor strangers, nay, nor your very cattle, must be employed in any business that is not of necessity for that day. Now, dear Christians, was this rest to be only a mere cessation from work, it would be rather a damage, than an advantage to us; because it would discourage industry, and countenance sloth; and therefore Almighty God expressly orders this rest to be sanctified, that is, to be employed in such works of piety, as may be to his honor, and your sanctification: *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day.*

The first commandment, as I have shewed you, obliges you chiefly to the interior worship of God in your hearts, by faith, hope, and charity. And since our words are the interpreters of our hearts, and usually proceed from thence, the second commandment teaches us how we are to speak of God, never to name him in vain, but always with that reverence and respect that is due to the divine Majesty. Now, the third commandment contains the perfections which complete them both, in determining the time wherein we are to own our dependence, and, by our actions pay that exterior worship and acknowledgment, which we ought always to have in our hearts.

The worship of God is doubtless agreeable to the law of nature, and inseparable from our reason and judgment; for the only consideration that he is our God, and we his creatures, shews him absolute, and that we in all depend on him: what we are, we have from him: what we possess, we have from his bounty: when, in what manner, and how long he pleases; what we fear, it is from his justice, which our sins have provoked: what we want, we must have from him, who is an inexhaustible source of all good: if we are oppressed by present evils, or lie under apprehensions of those which are to come, our recourse must be to him, who alone can relieve us. For what we have, reason tells us, we ought to return a grateful acknowledgment: for what we want, reason tells us we must petition him from whence all good

things come, and in whose hands are life and death, time and eternity, rewards and punishments.

When must we pay the adoration due to this sovereign Being? When must we make our just acknowledgments for the blessings we have received? When are we to petition for new favors, or at least, a continuation of the former? When are we to enter into ourselves, and to consider for what end we had our being, what use we have made of it, in order to this end, and how the accounts stand between God and us? How we discharge each duty God and his church require of us, particularly those of our state, in regard to our husbands, wives, children, masters, servants, and all family concerns, &c.? What an horror we have of sin, and what desire to increase in virtue? What care do we take to prevent eternal misery, and what do we do to gain heaven, and to secure that which alone can make us eternally happy, and without which we shall, for ever, be wretchedly miserable? What time must we take for these, which, you cannot but say, are weighty concerns? When must we go about these, and with such an application, as the interest we have in them truly deserves? Almighty God has assigned the Sabbath-day, and this even from the creation of the world. God is jealous of his honor, and requires our acknowledgment for what we are, and what we have; and therefore has assigned one day in seven to receive it from us; he is also truly concerned for those he has made, not only like himself, but for himself, to share his own eternal happiness; and therefore requires of them, to employ one day in the week for this only end. Yes, dear Christians, this is his day, and the day of audience to receive our petitions, and to grant them when they are just, and come from our hearts: to hear our wants, and to relieve them when it is for our good. Not but that God can hear us at all times, but we are not at leisure at all times, through the multiplicity of worldly business, to address ourselves to him in that solemn manner his awful majesty, and our truly great concern, requires of us: therefore he has sancti-

fied one day, and taken it entirely from all worldly concerns, and dedicated it to this end alone, and warns us to remember to keep it holy.

This third commandment, like the rest, includes a negative and an affirmative; that is, it forbids one thing, and commands another: what it forbids, is all servile work, which either necessity, or charity, does not require: what it commands, is to spend so much of the day in prayer, reading of books of devotion, meditation, examen of conscience, instructing others in certain works of piety, that we may truly say, we have sanctified or kept the day holy; for these are the very words of the law, clear and obvious to the meanest capacity: *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day.*

I design to explain to you both these. But first I must put you in mind, that the Jewish Sabbath is our Saturday, and changed by the church in the apostles' time, into the next day, which we call Sunday. For, though the worship of God be founded on the law of nature, and unchangeable, yet it is not necessarily fixed to any particular day; and, therefore, upon just motives, it is alterable, and was actually changed for several reasons, which St. Leo assigns in his ninth epistle to Dioscorus, bishop of Alexandria; (L. 83.) for whatsoever, says he, Almighty God has ever done, that was truly great, was done upon this day. First—the creation of the world was ended upon this day Secondly—the redemption of mankind, by the resurrection of Christ, was completed on this day, when death was overcome, and life renewed. Thirdly—upon this day the apostles received their commission to preach to, and teach, the whole world, and to baptize all nations. Fourthly—upon this day they were endowed with the power to forgive and retain sins; as St. John assures us in his gospel, "whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (Chap. xx.) Upon this day also, all the gifts of the Holy Ghost were poured upon the apostles, when he descended, in fiery tongues

and filled their minds and hearts with the knowledge of truth heavenly zeal, and a true Christian courage, fitting them for the conversion of the world. Upon this account it is justly called the Lord's day, and the obligations of the ancient Sabbath annexed unto it. And these are first in honor of so great a day, to abstain from all servile works.

Although Almighty God made all things for our use, yet in each kind we find he reserved, as I may say, something for himself. Of the creatures he produced, he retained a title to the first-born, which were to be sacrificed to him; of the product of the earth, he challenged the first fruits as his own: so of the time he has given us, he reserves one day in the week to himself, upon which our only business is to do his service: and therefore he calls it his day: "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy works, but on the seventh day, is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, thou shalt do no work on it." As we cannot but believe, that he fills with blessings those that comply with this duty, so we are sure he severely punishes those, who defraud him of this time he has chosen to himself; and we have a remarkable instance of his justice in this particular, where we read in the book of Numbers, (chap. xv.) how a person, who was gathering a few sticks in the fields on the Sabbath-day, was discovered, seized, and cast into prison for it, and his case brought before Moses and Aaron. Moses would not determine anything till he had consulted Heaven what was to be done: Almighty God ordered the criminal to be taken out of the prison, and to be carried into the fields, where the fault was committed, and there to be stoned to death by the whole multitude; and it was immediately executed, and he soon lay buried under a vast heap of stones, as a monument of God's just anger, and a warning to all others, that they might not profane the Lord's day.

Had Moses ordered this severe punishment for that which to us may seem a small fault, we should have been apt to attribute it to an over forward and indiscreet zeal of this holy man, and

that he had extended the punishment beyond the intention of the lawgiver: but now we have nothing to plead of this nature, the punishment was expressly ordered by God himself, who was the author of the law, and knew well the fault; he could neither be moved by exaggeration, nor imposed upon by false witnesses; and, therefore, no doubt, he was punished as the fault deserved, stoned to death, and this by the express order of God, for gathering a few sticks upon the Sabbath. Is not this enough to make those tremble, who have been guilty of greater faults against this commandment? Is not this enough to be a warning to all, and to strike you with an awful respect for the sanctity of this day? Is not this enough to make you for ever dread the profanation of it? If we measure the grievousness of the fault, by the greatness of the punishment, as in reason we ought, where he, who gives sentence, is a wise, just, and impartial judge, what a sense then ought you to have of this fault? Sure you will never more wonder, nor I hope will you ever forget it, that Almighty God warns you to remember this duty: *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day.*

It would be tedious to add the authority of Fathers and Councils, who are full of this duty, and the due observance of Sundays and holydays, with the blessings that attend such as are careful in this pious duty, and the punishment that but too often fall upon the profaners. I will therefore only cite you part of the fiftieth canon of the sixth council held at Paris, in the year 829, "where it forbids all country business, merchandizing, bargains, and the like: by doing these things you darken the light of christianity, and give too just an occasion of calumny to those who blaspheme the name of Christ." Then the Bishops immediately add, "There are many who have been struck with thunder for working on these days; of many of these we have been eye witnesses ourselves, and of many more we have heard by the relation of others. There are also others, who have been punished by a sudden contraction of their nerves; and more have

been struck dead by fire, and for their sins their bodies and very bones have in a moment been reduced to ashes: besides many other terrible judgments, there have been, and still are, whereby it is sufficiently declared, how much God is offended by the profanation of so great a day." If therefore the Jews, who kept the Sabbath only carnally, abstained from all servile works, how much more ought those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, to abstain from all such labor on that day the author of life did rise from death, and gave us hopes of rising with him; and to employ it only in spiritual joy, prayer, piety, and an unfeigned devotion?

These great judgments of God upon the profaners of this day were sufficient to animate the pastors of God's church to advertise the people of God's anger, so apparent in the visible punishments, the sudden and unprovided deaths of many of their guilty neighbors, and the impending danger that hung over their heads for the like abuses. Though those are not most guilty who are most remarkably punished, as our Saviour seems to say, (Luke xiii. 4.) of those who were crushed to death by the fall of the Tower of Siloe; yet sure the wrath of God falls heavy upon such who are made examples for the good of others, and to reclaim them from wickedness. Yet how much greater punishments do those deserve, who are guilty of the like abuses, and will take no warning, but still run on in their evil ways, till God's judgments overtake their wilful neglect?

You see how strictly, and under what penalties, servile work is forbid on these days, not only by the law of Moses, but also by the law of grace. To be punctual then, in the observance of this part of the precept, is the Christian's obligation; but doubtless, it is not our whole duty: we may abstain from labor, and employ the sacred time in sin; this sure cannot be agreeable to him, who desires and requires sanctity of us; this is not to keep a feast to God, but a holyday to the devil; this incense may please our enemy, but it is far from being a delightful odor to

the Almighty; and therefore he says, "Your Sabbaths, and your feasts, I will not abide; your assemblies are wicked, my soul hateth your calends, and your solemnities, they are become tedious to me, I have labored in sustaining them; and when you shall stretch forth your hands, I will turn my eyes away from you; and when you shall multiply your prayers, I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood," that is, of wickedness. No doubt, dear Christians, to plough and thrash on the Sabbath, is much less contrary to the sanctity of the day, than to be drunk, and to give one's self over to uncivil discourse and behavior, or any other wickedness: the one is lawful on most days, but this on none: the one is only evil upon the account of the time, but this is evil at all times, and upon all days.

"Observe the Sabbath," says St. Augustin, "but not carnally, and in Jewish delights, who abused this rest, in wickedness; for it is better to dig the whole day, than to dance the whole day." Ser. 1. in Ps. 32.

"A Jew," says he, "would do much better to labor in the field than to raise sedition on the stage; and their wives had better card wool on the Sabbath, than spend the day in immodest dances." (L. de 10. Cord. c. 3.) Besides, if the performance of servile work, that is otherwise lawful and our duty, be so severely and visibly punished by Almighty God, what mercy, think you, will such find who spend the day in sinful actions? Is it worse to gather a few sticks to make a fire, than to spend the Sunday and holiday mornings in gaming or drinking? Does it offend God more to gather a few sticks, than to spend a great part of the day in the ale-house? Which of these two take the mind more from God and the thoughts of our salvation? And whether drinking be not attended usually with far worse consequences, as detraction, immodest discourse, quarrelling, cursing, swearing, and the like? Do you think, dear Christians, that drunkenness, and making a beast of yourself, is less provoking to heaven upon Sunday, than hedging and ditching? Or is the

sanctity of the day less profaned by it? Do not you look upon what the ministers of God bless, to be holy, and therefore not to be applied to profane uses? Sure then, what God himself blesses, ought not to be employed in profane, much less sinful actions. Now the scripture assures us, that God blessed and sanctified this day: "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." Exod. xx. 11.

If, therefore, you have profaned the sanctity of the Sabbath, I say, not in servile work, but what is worse, in sinful liberties, and have not experienced the thunder of God, which has fallen so heavy on many others; if fire from heaven has not reduced you to ashes, in the very place where you offended? If you have not been made an example of God's anger, and hurried to the judgment seat by a sudden and unprovided death, as many have been; have you not reason to adore his unspeakable mercy towards you, and to bless his holy name for ever, for the patience he has had with you? And have you not reason, from this day, to resolve seriously, not only to put an end to such liberties, but also to repair your past excesses and negligence, by a more than ordinary exactness in the sanctification of the day, for this seems the most proper means to atone for past failings?

But suppose you abstain from work, and also from sin, the work of iniquity; yet you may employ the Sundays and holydays in sloth, in play, in idle company, or impertinences; will this be enough to sanctify the day? Will this discharge the duty of this commandment? No certainly, for there is nothing in all this that any ways contributes to the sanctification of the day, or of ourselves. This is only a Jewish Sabbath, and not a Christian. "They," says St. Augustin, "employed the day of rest in a dissolute and luxurious sloth. When God commanded them to sanctify the Sabbath, they rested to trifles and impertinences, and employed it in such things as God always forbid. They rested

from good works, as well as from bad." (In Spir. 92.) Now as these never sanctified them, so they can never sanctify us.

Therefore, to keep holy the Sabbath-day, we must, I think, in the whole, spend so much of the day in works of piety, prayer, and reading good books, examination of the state of our souls, preparation for receiving the sacrament, instructing others, or the like, we may with truth say, we have kept the day holy; for this is not only the intention of the law-giver, but the very words of the law: "Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath-day." A workman, for example, that spends an hour in a day in labor, and the rest in play, cannot be said to have spent the day in work, but in play; and therefore must not expect his day's wages. In like manner they who spend half an hour in prayer on the Sunday, and the rest in sauntering about, in chatting, and prating with any they meet, in household business, in play, in dressing themselves and children, can they be said to have sanctified the day, and to have kept it holy, when they can only place one half hour, or hour at most, to this account? Can they expect a day's wages from God, as having kept the Sabbath-day? I cannot say, dear Christians, that in any of these impertinences, they commit a great sin, because they are none but what are allowable without breach of the Sabbath. But when they are so much, or so many of them, that they take up almost the whole day, they hinder and prevent works of piety, whereby alone we sanctify the day. It is true, they do no harm, they do nothing that is amiss; and did the commandment run thus: "Thou shalt do no servile work on the Sabbath; thou shalt commit no sin upon it;" no doubt they would observe it, though they said no prayers at all. But, over and above this, God commands us to keep holy the Sabbath-day: holiness is not gained by negatives, but by pious and good actions, such as are means to contribute to our sanctification.

Certainly it is not the design of Almighty God, who made us for himself, and redeemed us by the blood of his only Son, in reserving this day to be kept holy, to indulge our ease and sloth,

or to gratify our vanity or folly, but to reserve a time for the improvement of our souls, and to give us leisure to consider, and provide for that long, long eternity, that will certainly receive us at the hour of our death, in bliss or woe.

Had you a just sense of this, had you a true value for your soul, I might have saved my labor, I need not have pressed this duty to you; you would not mispend one quarter of this precious day, but you would be eager to improve it to your best advantage, to your eternal good. I need not bid you leave off impertinences, when you saw eternity at stake; I need not bid you leave off your insignificant prattle with your neighbor, when you saw you might speak to, and treat with God himself about no less than the purchase of heaven, and your eternal settlement there. Had you a just sense of this, I need not bid you look into your souls and observe, whether there be nothing there that may be disagreeable to God, and inconsistent with your pretensions to heaven! your own solicitude would prevent my care, you would never think yourself secure enough, whilst hell and heaven were your great concern. I need not bid you spend the morning in prayer, and pious reading, you would never believe you did enough to gain so desirable a bliss as crowns the pious, and to avoid such a dreadful complication of woes as attend the wicked. You know very well, that, without a particular grace, you can never gain the promises of God; without that grace, you can never withstand the corruption of the world, and by consequence, without his grace, you will never be able to avoid everlasting misery, to which your corrupt inclinations drag you. And how can you obtain this grace, but by prayer, reading good books, hearing sermons, and the like? By these means the devil is expelled, and the Holy Ghost begins to be formed in your heart, who, by degrees, will work it into a true sense of another world. And what time, dear Christians, have you for this great affair, but Sundays and holydays? It is but then that you have leisure to solicit heaven for this so necessary grace, and to call down

mercy upon yourselves, children, and families: nay, though you had other spare time, yet this excuses you not from the obligation of this day, which is expressly assigned you by heaven. Though you had other spare time, yet none so favorable as this: it is our Lord's own day, consecrated by his resurrection, and kept in memory of it the whole year: it is his day of audience, assigned to hear our complaints, our petitions, our wants, either for ourselves or family; it is a day wherein he distributes, not worldly but heavenly treasures; and were you but as solicitous for this, as you are for the other, what purchases might you make? But, alas! men do not behave themselves towards God, as they do towards one another.

Consider, dear Christians, and perhaps it may give you some confusion, what do not men do, in regard of one another, when they hope for some relief in their miseries, or some addition to their fortunes! How solicitous are they to please, and what pains do they take to get an interest with them! And yet how narrow and scant is the power of man to assist one another in either of these ways! They can neither deliver them from the half part of their miseries, either interior or exterior; nor can they give them any qualifications of body or mind, which they stand in need of. We see persons daily perish before our eyes, and are not able to help them. Nay, it often happens, that those they make their application to, have no inclination to relieve them, or grant they had, they are not able to satisfy all their demands, their ability being far short of the wants and desires of such as have recourse to them: they are, therefore, under a necessity of refusing the greatest part, and they often do it without reason, by an unjust preference. On the other side, those who solicit for help, meet with a thousand obstacles that lie in their way: their pretended friends oftentimes do them ill offices upon a secret design to supplant them; sometimes they blacken their services, and sometimes they lessen their merits, so that the pretenders have much to do to clear themselves. "It is hard

(says St. Teresa,) to get admittance to the great ones of the earth; yet those are they we have much need of; they are not to be spoken with at all times, and in all places; and it is only such persons who are qualified can approach them; and if they be persons of a low rank that want their help, what interest must they make, and what favor must they have to get to speak with them? Besides, it is not in the power of man to attend always to others' necessities, nor can he always, though he desires it, relieve them upon the place." However, were we so happy as to be beloved by all men, and to have their favor and assistance in what they can do for us, we shall not after all this, be truly happy and content. Nay, it too often happens that their most valuable gifts prove our most effectual ruin, for though they may give what they are able, they cannot engage us to make good use of them, nor can they turn away the evil consequences, that are but too often almost inseparable from their favors.

But it is not thus when we address ourselves to God by prayer; we find in him an inexhaustible treasure of all good, to supply all our real wants, and to satisfy every just desire; he always grants us what we ask, or lets us know it is more profitable for us to want it: he is ready to hear and relieve us at all times, and in all places, unless it be our greater interest to have our requests deferred; he is willing to receive us, after all our disorders, if we return to him with our whole heart, and in all the tribulation of our souls.

All who are about him are not only desirous to assist us, but solicitous too to present our petitions to him, and intercede for us; nay, even without the mediation of any favorite, we may apply ourselves to him, and he will not only hear us when we call, and grant us what we ask, but as he sees into our hearts, thoughts and desires, he often prevents our demands. Our services too are never lessened, for the least we do for him is reckoned up to the utmost worth, nay, through Jesus Christ it is valued infinitely more than it is worth. He also hears us not

only for ourselves, but for others, and is so far from being displeased by our importunity, that he reproaches us for not asking oftener, that we have not sufficient confidence in his goodness. In fine, he gives us not only favors, but grace also to use them well. How comes it then, you make your court so much to men, and so little to God, when you have so many hindrances and hazards to disappoint you in the one, and none in the other? How comes it you seek and value so much the esteem and friendship of men, and make your application so little to him, who is doubtless the best of friends? So covetous of worldly conversation, and so unwilling to go to prayer? So eager for the blessings and conveniences of this life, and so indifferent to those of the next? So absorbed in earth, and so thoughtless for heaven? So afraid of the miseries here, and so unconcerned for those hereafter?

And yet how short is this life, and how long the other! How mean and beggarly are all the conveniences and satisfactions on earth, in regard to the joys of heaven! How small and short the evils we labor so much to avoid, in comparison of the long and dreadful sufferings that attend our neglect of duty! Is our soul so mean and inconsiderable as not to deserve the employing one day in seven, for its present comfort, and future bliss? Is heaven so cheap, and hell so contemptible. as not to deserve this care? Consider your wretched management, on the Sunday morning, when the whole concern of your soul lies upon your hands, when all the interest of heaven calls upou you, then you lie in bed, because you have nothing to do. The remainder of the morning is spent in preparing dinner, and necessary household business. Where is the sanctification of the day? Where is the provision for your soul? Where is your care for heaven?

Happy those whom God preserves from this tepidity; happy those whom he fills with a sense of his honor and their duty; and thrice happy those whose eyes he opens, to let them see what a treasure they have in prayer, and how much it is their interest,

frequently and heartily to address themselves to him. It is a great affair to treat with God about the business of our salvation, and the healing of our souls; to discover to him our wants, our imperfections, and our darkness, to open our hearts in all our necessities, and to move his compassion in our greatest wants.

It is a great affair to call to mind his blessings, and to make some return of gratitude; to consider and admire the wonders of his power, and to take from thence an occasion to praise his holy name. It is a weighty concern to call ourselves to an account, and settle our affairs for heaven; to examine into our ways, and to see whether our spirituals and temporals bear a due proportion, an equal balance. And therefore, Almighty God assigned us the Sabbath, one day in seven, to discharge all these duties, strictly obliging and charging us to *remember to keep it holy.*

I have here shewn you, dear Christians, your obligation; it is now yours, and only yours, to comply with it: God has sanctified the Sabbath-day, that you may keep it holy; he has peremptorily forbid all servile work, that is not of necessity for that day, and you see under what penalties. Sin likewise, above all, is prohibited, as being directly opposite to the sanctity of the time; and these are designedly removed by the fatherly providence of our God, that you may keep the day holy, that you may neither have sinful affections, nor worldly concerns, to disturb the rest and Sabbath of your souls; but that you may entirely attend to, and endeavor to secure, that truly great and only necessary concern for which you were made, and placed upon earth. That by prayer, reading good books, hearing divine service, instructing your children, and the rest, you may fit yourselves, and them, for that blessed and eternal Sabbath, which is reserved for you, in proportion to your compliance with the obligations of this.

this sacrifice; so, upon this account, no prayer can be so valuable, no prayer so beneficial to us, as is the devout hearing of Mass.

Besides, the Mass is a memorial, or representation of Christ's death, who desires hereby to live in our hearts, and continually to renew in our minds the memory of his love and sufferings; so as to excite in us a return of love and gratitude, and to serve him with greater fervor, as also to prevent our falling into that ingratitude of the Jews, who, as the royal psalmist says, "Forget the God who saved them who had done great things in Egypt." Now the prayers and ceremonies all contribute to this end; to lay before us some circumstance of his passion, what great things he did for us, and what a price he gave for our souls; even the ornaments the priest puts on, want not their mysterious signification.

First, the *amice* he puts first upon his head, and then upon his shoulders, signifies the veil wherewith the Jews covered the face of our Saviour in the house of Caiphas; and, striking him, said, "Prophesy who it is that has struck thee:" morally, it signifies the helmet of salvation, as St. Paul calls it, which is an entire confidence in God, whereby we overcome all the attempts of the devil. It is tied over the breast in the form of a cross, to remind us, that after this no thoughts ought to enter into our hearts, but such as tend to the sacrifice.

The *albe*, that reaches to the ground, represents the garment Herod put upon our Saviour in derision, when he sent him back to Pilate; morally, by its whiteness, it signifies the purity of life, that becomes the ministers of God; by its length, it minds us of perseverance in virtue, in hopes of an everlasting reward.

The *girdle* signifies the rope wherewith Christ was tied, when seized by Judas and his rabble, in the garden of Gethsemane: morally, it signifies chastity, which is frequently expressed in scripture by the girding of the loins. As the girdle ties up the albe, that it fall not to the ground, and occasion a stumble; so

the purity of heart preserves the sanctity of life from the most dangerous fall.

The *maniple* represents the cord wherewith Christ's hands were tied, when whipped at the pillar: morally, it signifies temporal afflictions: the right hand, says St. Gregory, signifies a fixed state of happiness, the left our unsettled condition in temporal miseries; so the maniple is put on the left arm: yet the one is gained by the other: the happy state by enduring patiently the miserable one, for the way to reap in joy is to sow in tears.

The *stole* represents the cord which they cast about our Saviour's neck, when they dragged him to Calvary, bearing his cross; the priest puts it about his neck, then crossing it over his breast, it interchangeably hangs on the right and left side, to put him in mind, that as he must expect alternatively prosperity and adversity, so he ought to be mindful of the cross of Christ in both; that he be not too much exalted by the one, nor too much dejected by the other; and thus he must expect to regain the stole of immortality lost by our first parents.

The *vestment* signifies the garment without seam, which our Saviour wore, and for which the soldiers cast lots, because they would not divide it: morally, it signifies charity, which ought to be uppermost, and overrule all our actions, and never ought to rent. Part hangs before, and part behind, to signify to us, that we must love God and our neighbor, and our enemies as well as our friends. This love is not to be divided; for if we really love God, we shall certainly love our neighbor for his sake, whether foe or friend. There is placed on it a pillar before, and a cross behind; that we may have continually before our eyes the two chief scenes of Christ's excess of love to us, his whipping at the pillar, and his crucifying on the cross. This consideration ought to sweeten all our sufferings, and make us bear the yoke of Christ with ease.

These ornaments are all blessed, and consecrated to the service of the altar; after that they are not to be applied to any other use.

The *altar* represents Mount Calvary, the place of sacrifice; the *chalice* is the sepulchre; and the *paten*, the stone rolled to the door of the monument; the *corporal* is the sindon, or white linen, wherein the body of our Saviour was wrapped.

The Mass is not now said in any vulgar language, any where in the whole church, and it never was but in three languages, Greek, Chaldaic, and Latin. Though the church was spread over the greatest part of the world in a short time, where different nations had different languages, yet upon their conversion, the church never, even from the beginning translated the liturgy, or Mass, into the language of the country; but in the east she kept to the Greek, and in the west to the Latin; when these languages by degrees ceased to be vulgar, she never made any alteration in her solemn office, but still kept to the same.

This constant method in the whole church is sufficient to authorize the practice above cavil. For, as St. Augustin says in his epistle to Januarius: (Ep. liv. L. 118.) "It is most insolent madness to dispute the lawfulness of what the whole church every where practices." Yet there want not weighty reasons to confirm it. For,

First, the same language, in the public office of the church, especially there, where the greatest mysteries of our faith are treated, preserve a great unity of the discipline of the church, and an easier communication.

Secondly, it is extremely proper that there should be some universal language, wherein the articles of our faith, the forms of the sacraments, and the public prayers of the church, should be clearly and distinctly expressed; that they might be as a standard in all countries, to avoid any mistake that might happen in any particular place, for want of the like method.

Thirdly, the want of this might be of ill consequence; for variety of speech, not only in different nations, but even in the same country, might occasion great disputes and confusion; as it has sometimes happened, not only about words, but even syllables;

witness the eager debate about *Mumpsimus* and *Sumpsimus*. And this cannot be easily remedied, where the language is not common to the chief pastor of the church.

Fourthly, the dignity and majesty of these holy mysteries seem to require to be expressed in such a form of words, as should not be subject to change upon every improvement made in a language, to avoid mistakes and errors by insensible changes.

Lastly, the barbarity of some languages might occasion much distraction to strangers there, where the greatest respect and devotion is due.

Besides, we have an example for this amongst the Jews, who, after their captivity, spoke Chaldaic, yet always said the psalms, and read the scripture in Hebrew; and this is the practice of the modern Jews, even at this day.

However, the saying Mass in Latin is no disadvantage to the people, who understand it not, because, as I said before, the substance and the value of the Mass consists not in the prayers that are said, but in the sacrifice that is offered: not in words, but in action: the consecration of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, to which a few words suffice, viz. *This is my body*, and *This is my blood*, pronounced by the priest, before the elevation of each species.

Now, dear Christians, be pleased to observe what I say; if, before Mass, or at least some time before the elevation, you say thus to yourself: "My God, I offer up to you this Mass, which, by your assistance, I design this day to hear: I present unto you this unbloody sacrifice of your only Son, to pay unto you that sovereign homage, and that supreme honor that is due to you from me, and all creatures: I also offer it up to you in thanksgiving, for the benefits and blessings you have bestowed upon me, and in particular, for such and such: I offer it to you, to beg pardon for my sins, and the remission of the punishment due to them, through the sufferings of this your only Son, who offers himself to you a victim for me. I beseech you, that you will not

regard my unworthiness, but that you will look upon his merits: I beg also, that upon his account, you will grant me this or that favor, virtue, or blessing, to overcome this temptation, to deliver me, if thou think fit, from this trouble, and grant me patience under this trial: that you will be pleased to direct me in the choice of my state of life, that therein I may prefer heaven before earth, my eternal before my temporal advantage; that I may not be overruled by human motives, but still keep my eye fixed on my future state. I beg also by this Mass, that you will be pleased to favor me with true repentance, perseverance in virtue, and a happy death." You may likewise offer it up for your friends, as well as yourself, for their good, wants, or necessities, whether living or dead. You may, in fine, beg temporal blessings, with this condition, if God sees your receiving of them be for the real good of your soul.

Now, if you make your intention in this or such like manner for all, or any of these ends, and then say your prayers during Mass attentively and devoutly, either in your book, or on your beads, or what is best of all, accompany the priest in all he says; you do not only receive the advantage of your prayers, but over and above the value of them, you have a share in the merits of your Saviour Jesus Christ applied to you by this sacrifice of the Mass. Upon this account the hearing Mass devoutly, is not only incomparably the best, but most advantageous of all prayers whatever: for what God may justly refuse to our unworthiness, he will grant to his only beloved Son, when he intercedes for us, when he lies upon the altar a victim to him, and a victim for us; when he renews to him the memory of his sufferings, the price of your soul: when he pleads our cause, and offers to supply, out of his own, what is deficient in us, and proffers a consideration not to be refused; his deserts to pay our debts, his infinite treasure for our insufficiency. What can be refused to such an intercessor, who, in quality of a sacrifice, pleads and offers himself for us, were but our souls prepared, and our hearts truly disposed to

receive it? Blessed be God for ever, who has left with us so dear a blessing, so valuable a treasure, and so powerful a sacrifice; no less than his only Son to plead for us, to satisfy for us, to turn away his anger, and render him propitious to us. Thus you see, dear Christians, that it is not necessary to understand the prayers, to reap the benefits of the Mass, but to know the value of it, and to offer it up to God for what we stand in need of.

However, I will here explain to you the meaning of what is said and done in the Mass, to raise in you a greater devotion, and to increase your desire to assist at it more frequently, and with a more respectful behavior. The greatest blessings of heaven, when they become common, often lose their value with us; and such is the perverseness of our nature, that what should increase our ingratitude, occasions too often our indifference and neglect.

In this sacrifice is comprehended and abridged the whole mystery of our redemption; so it is celebrated with great solemnity, and more prayers and pious ceremonies, and all, even the smallest, have their weight and signification, and point out to us some passage of Christ's nativity or death; for thus he designed it when he said, *This do for the commemoration of me.*

When the priest has made his intention for whom, and for what end, he designs to offer up the Mass, *as every one ought to do,* he descends to the foot of the altar, bows to the crucifix, kneels, or makes a genuflexion, if the blessed sacrament be present, and making the sign of the cross, he begins with the forty-second psalm, rejoicing at the coming of our Redeemer, by whom our tears are wiped away, sin destroyed, and we encouraged with hope to enter one day into his eternal tabernacles. This psalm in Passion or Holy Week, and in the Mass for the dead, is omitted, being a time for mourning. But to perform this sacred action with the greatest purity of heart, he says the *Confiteor,* and some other prayers, acknowledges his sins, begs pardon of God for himself and all the people; beseeches the mother of Christ, the

apostles, and all the saints in heaven, to make intercession for him; the people answer, and make the like acknowledgment, and repeat the same request.

In this disposition he ascends, or goes up to the altar, and begins the *Introit*, which is usually some verses taken out of the psalms, such as suit best with the present feast. In solemn Mass it is sung in the choir, as soon as the priest and assistants come out of the vestry.

This represents to us the ardent desires of the ancient patriarchs and prophets for the coming of the Redeemer; "Many prophets and kings," says our Saviour, "have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them;" (Luke x. 24.) Their common voice was, "Shew us, O Lord, thy mercy, and grant us thy salvation." Psalm lxxxiv. 8. "That sittest upon the cherubims, shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses." Ibid. lxxix. 2. "Send forth, O Lord, the Lamb, the ruler of the earth." Isaias xvi. 1. "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, and wouldst come down." Ibid. lxiv. 1. And sometimes they addressed themselves to the earth, and beg this flower would bud forth; sometimes to the clouds, that they would rain down this just one, and the like.

After this is said alternatively the *Kyrie Eleison;* that is, Lord, have mercy on us; and this nine times, to represent the deplorable state we were in before the coming of our Saviour; *Kyrie Eleison* is said thrice in honor of God the Father; then *Christe Eleison* thrice in honor of God the Son, to signify both his natures, human and divine: then *Kyrie Eleison* again, three times in honor of the Holy Ghost, because he is one and the same nature with the Father and the Son, as God.

Here follows the *Gloria in excelsis*, "Glory on high to God, and on earth peace to men of good will," &c. This was the joyful hymn sung by the angels at our Saviour's birth; it raises in us fresh hopes of an eternal peace, after the troubles of this life

patiently endured. In solemn Mass the priest only intones it, and the whole choir goes on with it; because, as St. Luke tells us, as soon as the angel had delivered the welcome news of our Redeemer's birth, a whole choir of angels descended from heaven, and sung this hymn.

Here the priest stands in the middle of the altar, to shew, that by our Saviour's birth, a reconciliation was made betwixt heaven and earth, God and man. Then he turns about, and salutes the people, saying, *Dominus vobiscum*, Our Lord be with you; this is the usual salutation in scripture: thus the angel saluted Gideon: (Jude vi. 12.) "Our Lord be with thee, thou stoutest of men." Thus the prophet sent by God to Asa, king of Judah, (2 Para. xv. 2.) salutes him and the people after the victory, "Our Lord be with you, as you have been with him." Thus the Angel Gabriel saluted the Blessed Virgin; and thus St. Paul frequently saluted the faithful in his epistles. And certainly it is the greatest of blessings for God to be with us, and we with him. The people, by the assistant, answer, *Et cum spiritu tuo;* and with thy spirit, to testify mutual charity.

The prayers are next, which are one or more, and fitted to the time and solemnity of the feast; these are said in the name of all, and for the necessities of all; and ever concluded with an address to our Saviour Christ, hoping through his merits, to obtain what we ask, being mindful of that kind promise of his, "If you ask the Father any thing in my name, he will give it to you." John xvi. 23.

Then he reads the epistle, which represents to us the doctrine of the Old Testament, and the preaching of St. John Baptist, the precursor of our Saviour, though it is often taken out of St. Paul's epistles, from whence it takes its name. At the end is said, *Deo gratias*, thanks be to God, in gratitude for the light of that doctrine, which was a preparation for the gospel: this is followed by a *gradual*, so called, because those who sung it, stood upon a place raised some *gradus*, or steps, above the rest;

it signifies the penance the people did at the preaching of the Baptist. The *allelujahs* that follow, signify the joy a pious soul conceives upon the obtaining of pardon of her sins; and, upon this account, after Easter, all the paschal time, it is more frequently repeated.

The book is removed for the reading of the gospel; which is, and signifies the doctrine Christ taught. The priest begins it, by making the sign of the cross on the book, upon his forehead, mouth, and heart, and every one present should do the like. He makes it on the book to signify that it is Jesus Christ crucified, whom he ought to preach; upon his forehead, the seat of bashfulness, because he ought never to be ashamed of the cross of Christ; on his mouth and heart, as a solemn protestation, that he will not only retain a value and esteem for the faith of Christ in his heart, but that he will profess it openly, by his mouth, before the whole world. The book, I said, is removed to the left corner of the altar, because the right signifies the just, and the left sinners: and our Saviour saying, that he came not to call the just, but sinners, to penance, the gospel, therefore, is read on the left corner, being directed to them.

And here also the priest turns his face towards the north, because the preaching of the gospel is particularly directed against him, viz. Lucifer, who said: "I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north—I will ascend above the height of the clouds—I will be like the Most High." Isa. xiv. 13, 14. At the reading of the gospel, both here, and at the end of the Mass, all stand up, to shew their readiness to obey it, and to defend it.

And indeed, sinners have reason to raise their heads; for, by the gospel, pardon is promised to their repentance. At the end, all answer, *Laus tibi Christe;* praise be to thee, O Christ, in acknowledgment of our receiving the gospel, and the blessings that attend it, from him. The priest kisses the book, to notify his approbation and union with Christ, and at the same time begs

pardon for the sins of all. Upon Sundays, and some other feasts, there is read that exposition of faith composed in the Council of Nice, which we call the creed, making after the gospel, an open profession of our faith; "For with the heart, we believe unto justice, (says St. Paul, Rom. x. 10.) but, with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation."

Before the offertory there was usually a prone, or sermon, for the benefit of the catechumens, that is, such as were not yet baptized, but under instruction for that end; as also for sinners who were in penance. At the end of the prone, the deacon said to them, *Ite, missa est;* Go, it is now the Mass; that is to say, the Mass of the faithful, as it was usually called, or the Mass of the sacrifice now begins, you must therefore go out of the church; for it was not thought fit, in former ages, the catechumens should be present at so sacred an action as the sacrifice is, because they were not yet baptized; nor sinners, who were in penance, because, by their sins, they had forfeited the grace of their baptism. This exclusion was looked upon by the penitents to be a great part of their penance, and was no small awe upon them, to make them more cautious of relapse, seeing sin deservedly deprived them of the participation of those blessings the faithful enjoyed in the divine sacrifice of the Mass.

Though it be the same spirit which still governs the church, yet the discipline in this is changed, and sinners are admitted to be present; yet doubtless, notwithstanding this indulgence, they ought to come, as I told you, with a truly humble and contrite heart, if they expect to reap any benefit from this truly great and adorable mystery. Thus far is called the Mass of the catechumens. After this the priest turns to the faithful, and salutes them again with *Dominus vobiscum*, Our Lord be with you, and *Oremus*, desiring them again to pray, and also now to make the offertory with him.

The offertory is a ceremony, wherein, by prayer, the bread and wine are assigned and deputed for the matter of the sacrifice;

which the priest, by several collects or prayers, begs that it may be for the remission of his, and all the people's sins; as likewise for those of the faithful, whether living or dead, and that it may prove salvation to all. Here every one may renew their intention, and offer up the sacrifice for themselves and friends, for the pardon of all their sins, and for the gaining of such virtue and grace as they know most wanting and necessary for them. Here is mixed a drop or two of water with the wine, because when our Saviour's side was pierced with a lance, there issued out water and blood: morally, it signifies the union of the people with Christ; a drop of water is but of small value, yet, mixed with wine, it is turned into the substance of wine, and becomes equally valuable. Our prayers are of small force, yet, intermixed with those of Christ, they are dignified by his, and highly valuable on his account.

Then the priest washes his fingers wherewith he is to touch the blessed sacrament, after consecration; and this puts us in mind, what interior purity of heart is required in all who assist at this mystery, and particularly in him who consecrates this adorable sacrament. In the mean time he says part of the twenty-fifth psalm, which is very proper for the circumstance. He returns to the middle of the altar, and after some prayers said in a low voice, whereby he begs the blessed Trinity to accept of the sacrifice for the designed ends, through the death and passion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ; and beseeches the Mother of God, the apostles, and all the saints, whose memory we celebrate on earth, that they will be pleased to intercede for us in heaven, that this oblation may be to the honor of God and our eternal good. Then turning to the people, he says, *Orate Fratres, &c.* Pray, brethren, that mine and your sacrifice may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty, and they, answering, beg the same; then he prays again in a low voice.

This prayer, in silence, is designed to raise in us an awful respect for the mysteries that are about to be performed, and puts

us in mind of our Saviour's prayer, who during the three hours he hung upon the cross, spoke only seven words aloud, yet doubtless he prayed all the time, and offered up to his Eternal Father, in silence, his sufferings and death, as a sacrifice to him for the whole world. Yet once more before the canon, which I shall explain to you in the next discourse—the priest breaks silence, and says the preface in audible voice, and exhorts the people again to raise up their hearts to God, the sacrifice now approaching: He has reason to call upon us, for earthly souls are but too apt to have their hearts not upon God, but upon the world; not fixed in heaven, and on the great concern of their souls, but grovelling upon earth, and intent upon worldly concerns: "For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also," (Matt. vi. 21.) says our Saviour. Yet, certainly, if ever we ought to have our hearts on the things above, it is at this time, when heaven is ready to descend down to us, Christ being about to be sacrificed. The assistant, in the name of the people, answers, "They have their hearts raised up to God." Then he gives thanks to God, who made us, through Christ, who redeemed us, and by whom all the choirs in heaven praise his name, and sing, (Isai. vi. 3.) "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of Hosts;" and concludes with the joyful acclamation wherewith the people received our Saviour, the last time he entered into Jerusalem, before he suffered: "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest;" (Matt. xxi. 9.) that is, praise and glory be to him who dwells in the highest heavens.

Thus far you see the explanation of the Mass, and of what belongs to it; you see how all things contribute to raise our hearts up to God, and to put us in mind of him who did such great things for us; redeeming us by his death, and leaving with us so dear a pledge of his love. You see how the vestments the priest uses, have all their pious significations; and as they are blessed, and given to the use of the altar, so they can never be applied

to any other use; when they are so worn, that they are useless for that end for which they were consecrated, they must be burnt, and the ashes put in a place assigned for that purpose.

You see, dear Christians, how you may hear Mass devoutly, and reap the whole benefit of it, without understanding the language it is said in; in fine, you see the meaning of the ceremonies, and the design of the prayers; it is in your power to reap the benefit by them, which Christ and his church has designed for you. In this mystery, Christ comes down from heaven to lie on our altars; let us improve the favorable advantage, and make an altar for him in our hearts, which he may never leave till he has fixed them in his heaven above.

DISCOURSE IV.

ON THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day, &c.—Exod. xx. 8, &c.

As nothing contributes more to the sanctification of the Sabbath than the devout hearing of Mass, so I am persuaded the knowledge of what is said and done in that great and adorable mystery, promotes in a considerable manner the devotion of all such who have a just sense of the mercies of God, and the good of their own souls; I will, therefore, continue and finish the explanation of it.

After the priest has called upon us, now more particularly, to raise up our hearts to God, the sacrifice immediately approaching, he begins the canon of the Mass, so called, because it is the rule and order the church always observes in the celebration of Mass, without any considerable alteration: he begins it in the name of all the faithful, and addresses himself to God the Father; presents this sacrifice to him, through Jesus Christ his Eternal Son, and our Mediator, in this prayer: "We, therefore, most merciful

Father, beseech thee, through thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, to accept and bless these gifts, these presents, these immaculate sacrifices, which in the first place we offer unto thee, for thy holy Catholic church, to which thou wilt please to grant peace, and to preserve and maintain it in unity, through the whole world, with Pope N. thy servant, and our Bishop N. with all true believers and observers of the Catholic and Apostolic faith."

By this prayer he begs of God, so to sanctify by his holy spirit, what is performed by his humble ministry, that it may be filled with the blessings of heaven. It is our part, dear Christians, to call upon God, and to implore his assistance and blessing: but it is his goodness that gives it, through the merits of Christ our chief priest, who sanctifies the gifts, and accepts them when sanctified. The bread and wine are called gifts, presents, and immaculate sacrifices, three names for same oblation; and at each word the priest makes a cross over them, to mind us that the whole Trinity delivered up Christ to be crucified. They are now in the plural number called gifts, presents, and sacrifices, because before consecration, bread and wine are two distinct substances; but after consecration, they are but one and the same, viz. the body and blood of Jesus Christ. This oblation is called gifts, because God has given it unto us, by giving us his only Son; it is called presents, because God accepts them from us: it is called sacrifices, because offered up to God.

It is the Father gives his Son, it is the Son offers himself, and it is the Holy Ghost accepts the oblation; "for Christ, (says St. Paul, Heb. ix. 14.) who offered himself unspotted unto God." Though all the actions of the blessed Trinity are inseparable from each person, yet for distinction of the persons the Father is said to give, because authority belongs to the Father. The Son is said to offer, upon the account of his humanity; and the Holy Ghost to accept, because benignity and goodness are attributed to the third person. The three crosses are made over the oblation also, upon another account, because Christ was delivered up

to be sacrificed by three different persons, by God, by Judas, and by the Jews. The first was out of grace, the second out of avarice, the third out of envy; God the Father gave us him, because he so loved the world, as to give his only Son for us; Judas betrayed him out of covetousness, the high priest promising him a present of thirty pieces of money; and the Jews delivered him up to be crucified out of envy, as Pilate declared. However, we have reason to admire the goodness of God, who is pleased to bestow upon us so valuable a gift, and after that to accept it again from us in all its worth. This the priest first offers to God for the Pope, head of the church, and vicar of Jesus Christ, who governs it under him; then for the bishop, who, by the institution of Christ, governs the respective diocess; and lastly, for all the faithful, and begs God's protection over all, and that peace and unity may reign in the whole world.

He passes from this to the first Memento, which is for the living, so called, because here he stops, remembers, and recommends to Almighty God, all his friends, who are living, in particular, or general; begs pardon for their sins, and such graces as God sees necessary for them; he prays for all the pastors of God's church, and for all the faithful, particularly those under his care, or for whom he has any obligation to pray; for all his benefactors, spiritual or temporal, and those for whom he offers up the Mass, if they be living; and concludes the Memento, by recommending to God all who are present, for whom he offers, or who offer for themselves and friends this divine sacrifice.

Here it is very proper for each to make their Memento with the priest, and to recommend to Almighty God their necessities and wants; to pray for themselves and friends, parents, and children, relations and benefactors, and in general for the whole church; for, though the priest alone consecrates, yet as each do, or may offer up the sacrifice, so they ought to put up their petitions to the Father of all mercy, and at this favorable time

beg of him, through the merits of Jesus Christ, all they judge necessary for themselves and theirs.

Now the church, being mindful of that union and communion, which there is between the blessed in heaven and the faithful on earth, to make their oblation more acceptable to God, begs the intercession of the virgin mother, of the apostles, martyrs, and of all the saints in heaven; hoping through their prayers and merits, to obtain what our weakness dares not presume, viz. that in all the occurrences of this life, we may be shielded by the protection of heaven. And this is what God has often promised to us, through the intercession of the saints, and particularly to King Ezechias, when besieged by the Assyrians: "I will save this city," says the Almighty God to him, "and I will protect it upon my own account, and upon the account of my servant David." (4 Reg. xix. 34.) And thus Moses makes use of the intercession of the saints to appease the anger of God: "Let thy anger cease, says he, and be appeased upon the wickedness of thy people; remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou sworest by thy ownself, saying, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven." (Exod. xxxii. 12, 13.) Thus Solomon prays to God, "For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thy anointed." Psalm cxxxi. 10.

This intercession being made, he spreads his hands over the chalice and the host, in testimony that he offers up himself to God, together with the sacrifice; and in this disposition he begs four things; first, that he will be pleased graciously to accept of this oblation, which he and all present humbly offer unto him; secondly, that amidst the dangers and temptations of this life, he will grant us his peace, to accompany us in all we do; thirdly, that he will preserve us from everlasting death; and lastly, at the end of our days, he will be pleased to place us amongst his blessed in heaven.

This is followed by another prayer, begging this offering may be blessed, approved, effectual, reasonable, and acceptable for the

ends for which it is made; and here, at these words, he makes three crosses over the bread and wine, to signify the three actions our Saviour used before the institution of this sacrifice and sacrament: first, he took bread and wine; secondly, he blessed it; thirdly, he gave it to his disciples. Then begging it may become the body and blood of his only Son our Lord, to expiate our sins, and reconcile us to God, he makes a cross on each species apart, because Christ said apart, "This is my body, eat ye of it; and this is my blood, drink ye of it."

After this, the priest comes to the principal action of the sacrifice, and commemorates all that Christ said and did, when he instituted this sacrament, saying, "The day before he suffered, he took bread into his holy and venerable hands, and lifting up his eyes towards heaven, to thee his God, and omnipotent Father, and giving thanks to thee, he blessed, broke, and gave it to his disciples, saying, *Take and eat ye all of this;* then, in the person of Christ, and in his words, he adds, for *This is my body.*" Here, dear Christians, is a great change, and requires all our devotion, our greatest recollection, and most humble adoration; for here the Son of God is truly and really present among us. The words are no sooner spoken, but Christ descends from heaven, and clothes himself with the species of bread. No doubt, says St. Chrysostom and St. Gregory, but the heavens open, and the angels descend as they did at his birth: and with a silent astonishment, and a profound respect, adore their Lord and God. What wretches must we be, if we do not accompany them, and with truly repenting and respectful hearts, pour forth our souls before him, and make our adoration in the best manner we are able? for it is for us he descends from heaven, and it is for us he thus lies a sacrifice on the altar to his eternal Father.

The priest kneels and adores, then lifts it up to be seen and adored by all present; then laying it down, he adores again. After this he takes the chalice, saying, in like manner, "After he had supped, taking this excellent chalice into his holy and

venerable hands, giving thee also thanks, blessed it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take ye, this is my body. And having taken the chalice, giving thanks he gave it them. And they all drank of it. And he said to them: This is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many." (Mark xiv. 22, 23, 24.) Then he kneels and adores, and in like manner elevates it to be adored; then calling to mind the love of Christ to us, in this institution, he repeats his words, "As often as you do this, do it in commemoration of me." 1 Cor. xi. 25.

Herein, dear Christians, consists the whole value, force and nature of a sacrifice. For though under each species of bread and wine, entirely Christ is contained; yet, inasmuch as they are consecrated separately, Christ, (and the priest in his name, saying separately, *this is my body* over the bread, and *this is my blood* over the wine, there is made a lively and efficacious representation of the violent death he suffered. And though death be here only in representation, yet it is a real sacrifice; in as much as Christ is represented under the figure of death, or placed upon the altar under those signs which represent his death. No doubt the presence of Christ, thus in quality of a victim, is a powerful intercession before God for all mankind, according to the saying of the apostle, (Heb. ix. 24.) that Jesus Christ presents himself, and appears for us before the face of God; so under this figure of death, he intercedes for us, and represents continually to his Father that death which he has suffered for his church. Here certainly it is a proper devotion to renounce our evil ways, and offer up our lives and actions, as a living sacrifice to him for the remainder of our lives.

Whilst you are left to these pious thoughts, the priest goes on in prayer, and calls to mind the passion, resurrection and ascension of Christ; for he did not only die for our sin, as the apostle says, (Rom. iv. 25.) but rise again for our justification; and (Mark xvi. 19.) ascending into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, and becomes our advocate there

Mention is made of these three mysteries, chiefly to shew our gratitude for this great blessing; the passion of Christ inflames our love and charity, the resurrection strengthens our faith, and the ascension raises our hope. Wherefore, says the priest, "we and all thy sanctified people, offer up to thee, O God, out of thy own gifts, a pure sacrifice, a holy sacrifice, an immaculate sacrifice, holy bread of eternal life, and a chalice of perpetual salvation." At each of these five expressions, he makes a cross, in memory of the five wounds Christ received in his crucifying, and the five blessings he thereby purchased for us, viz. faith, hope, charity, the beatitude of our souls, and the glory and immortality of our bodies. Before the consecration, crosses are made to beg some blessing, and to consecrate what is offered to God through the merits of Christ, who purchased all blessings for us, by his death on the cross.

But after consecration, crosses are made only to commemorate the virtue of the cross; and to put us in mind, what Christ suffered on the cross for us. After this he begs of God, that as he graciously accepted of the sacrifices of Abel, Abraham, and Melchisedech, he will look upon this infinitely valuable victim, his only Son. Then bowing down, he humbly and earnestly begs of God, that he will order not only the body and blood of Christ, here contained under different species, but also the vows and prayers of all the faithful, to be presented by his holy angels upon his high altar in heaven, before the throne of his Divine Majesty. No doubt, dear Christians, the angels present our pious prayers to God, and second them by their own. Thus the angel Raphael assures us himself: (Tob. xii. 12.) "When thou didst pray with tears, (says the angel to Tobias,) and left thy dinner to bury the dead, I offered thy prayer to the Lord." Of this also St. John assures us: "Another angel," (says he, Apoc. viii. 3, 4.) "came and stood before the altar, having a golden censer," and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before

the throne of God: and the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, from the hand of the angel."

But to go on—the priest concludes this prayer, and begs, that all who receive with him, and partake of the body and blood of Christ, may be filled with all heavenly blessings and grace. Here he makes three crosses: First, on the body, in remembrance of what Christ endured in his body when stretched on the cross: The second, over the blood, calling to mind the blood he shed for us: The third, upon himself, to shew that the fruit of these sufferings are all communicated to us, if worthy receivers.

This prayer is no sooner ended, but he makes his second memento for the dead, for those faithful souls who have gone before us, and now rest in the sleep of peace. Such as die in our Lord, neither divided from his mystical body by schism or heresy, nor separated from his friendship by mortal sin, are not properly dead, but only sleep in peace, to be raised another day to an immortal life; and, as they now live in grace, they are capable of the blessings of this sacrifice, instituted for the benefit of the dead, as well as the living, to ease their torments, and discharge their debts. Here each one may (with no small advantage to their deceased friends,) make their mementos with the priest; and pray for his relations, friends, and benefactors, those for whom he has any obligation, or for whom he thinks fit to pray, or such who stand most in need of his prayers. "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead," (says the scripture 2 Mac. xii. 46.) "that they may be released from the torments their sins deserve." It is also advantageous to us; for doubtless, God will reward our pious zeal, by raising us friends another day when we shall stand in need. Besides, the charity of such souls, who have reaped benefit by our prayers, will not let them be unmindful of us. After the priest has prayed in particular for such as he thinks fit, he begs in general for all

t rest in Christ, that they may enjoy a place of refreshment, of light and peace, through the same Christ our Lord.

Then knocking his breast, he raises his voice a little, and says, *Nobis quoque peccatoribus.* Having prayed for the living, the dead, some in particular, and all in general, he prays for himself, that God would vouchsafe to grant to him though a sinner, yet still his servant, who hopes through the multitude of his mercies, a share in that happiness the apostles, martyrs, and saints now enjoy. For the priest, as St. Paul says, offers sacrifice not only for the people, but also for himself, and his own sins.

I say, he knocks his breast and raises his voice, to put us in mind of the centurion, (Matt. xxvii., Luke xxiii.) and others who were present at the sorrowful spectacle of Christ's passion; who seeing the earthquake, and what happened at his death, went away knocking their breasts, and repenting from their hearts. However, the priest begs this favor for himself, not out of any desert of his own, but entirely through the merits of Christ, by whom he creates, sanctifies, quickens, and blesses all things, and gives them unto us; for by him, with him, and in him there is all honor and glory due to God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost. Here the priest, as he says this prayer, makes the sign of the cross over the body and blood, at those words which express to us, that God sanctifies, enlivens, and blesses all things through Christ, to signify to us, the sanctity spiritual life, and all blessings whatsoever, are bestowed upon us through the virtue of the cross; and it is made thrice, to renew in our minds, that Christ hung three hours on the cross to purchase these blessings for us. Then again, taking the host in his hand, with it he makes three crosses over the chalice, to signify to us the three sorts of torments he endured in his body, in his soul, and in his heart. Of the torments he suffered in his body, he says in the lamentations of the prophet Jeremiah, (Chap. x.) "All you that pass by the way, observe and see if there be any grief like unto my grief." And again, (Psalm

xxi.) "They have dug my hands and feet: they have numbered all my bones." Of the great grief of his soul he says himself, (Matt. xxvi. 38.) "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." And of the compassion of his heart, we cannot but be sensible, when we hear him pray for his persecutors, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." These three crosses are made over the chalice, because, by the chalice, our Saviour often expresses the bitterness of his passion. To the sons of Zebedee he said, "Can you drink the chalice that I am to drink?" And in the garden, he says to his Father, (Matt. xxvi. 39.) "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me."

After this he makes two crosses more from the side of the chalice, to represent the death of Christ, the separation of his body and soul. Three substances, dear Christians, were united in Christ, viz., his divinity, his soul and body; but two only were separated by his death, viz., his body and soul; for his divinity, even in death, remained united to both; and therefore, his death is represented by two crosses only. He ends this prayer, and with it the canon of the Mass, saying the last words, *Per omnia Sæcula Sæculorum*, aloud; because Christ expiring, with a loud voice gave up the ghost.

The canon being ended, the priest says the Lord's Prayer: First, because so holy an action cannot be better ended, than with that prayer which Christ himself instituted and obliged us to say: Secondly, whatsoever he taught us to ask, either for the necessities of this present life, or of that to come, cannot be more seasonably, or more effectually recommended to God the Father, than when we commemorate the death of his only Son, and who now as our victim pleads for us. St. Gregory the Great adds a third reason. The "Pater-Noster," says he, (L. vii. Ep. 44.) "is said at the end of the canon, because the apostles usually consecrated without saying any other prayers besides this." The assistant answers with the last petition, *But deliver us from evil*, which the priest takes up, and begs to be delivered from all evils,

past, present, and to come. Evils past, from which we desire to be delivered, are the consequences of evil, chiefly sin. For though the sinful action be over, yet the guilt, or the punishment at least, but too often remains.

Evils present are our daily failings, continual temptations, with all the miseries that usually attend this life. Future evils are such as may befal us through our own passions, the malice of the devil, or the wickedness of the world. He ends his prayer in begging of peace for the church, by the intercession of the Mother of God, the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, St. Andrew, and of all the saints in heaven, and this according to the order of the apostle. "I desire first of all," says he, (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.) "that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings, be made by men; for kings, and for all that are in high stations, that we may lead a quiet and a peaceable life in all piety and chastity." He begs this particularly in his days, according to the example of holy Ezechias, (Isai. xxxix. 8.) "Let peace and truth be in my days," leaving the disposal of the future to God's good will and pleasure.

After this he takes and divides the host, as we read our Saviour did, breaking it, and giving it to his disciples. It is broke in three parts, which represent the mystical body of Christ, the church in three states, the blessed in heaven, the souls in purgatory, and the faithful on earth, for all which this sacrifice is offered. First, in honor of the saints in heaven—secondly, for the relief of the souls in purgatory—and thirdly, for the great benefit of the faithful on earth. That part which he lays down on the paten, signifies the faithful living: that which he holds in his hand, the souls in purgatory: that which he breaks off from it, the blessed in heaven. This last part he puts into the chalice, and mixes with the blood. By this action is signified the union with Christ, body and soul at his resurrection. He makes three crosses over the chalice with it, before he mixes it, to put us in mind that the resurrection of Christ was by the joint power of the blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; at

the same time he says, "The peace of our Lord be always with you." This was the salutation of our Saviour to his apostles, when he came to them after his resurrection. "The doors being shut," says St. John, "Christ came in, and standing in the middle of the room where the apostles were, he said unto them, *Peace be to you;* then he shewed them his hands and his side, to let them see how dear his peace cost him: I have purchased peace for you, a reconciliation between God and man, and if you would know at what rate, observe these wounds in my hands and feet." The people answer the priest, *Et cum Spiritu tuo*, wishing the same peace to him.

Now, as sin is the only obstacle of his heavenly peace, so the priest begs earnestly pardon and mercy for himself and the people, saying thrice, "Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us." By the sacrifice of the innocent lamb in the old law, to take away legal uncleanness, was prefigured the sacrifice of Christ, who truly takes away the sins of the world. "You were not redeemed," (says St. Peter, chap. i. 18, 19.) "with corruptible things, as gold or silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled." This prayer the Baptist taught, when seeing our Saviour, he said to his disciples, "Behold the Lamb of God! Behold him that takes away the sins of the world!" At the end of the third repetition there is not said now, *Have mercy on us*, but *Grant us peace.* This was changed about the year one thousand, when the church was in considerable distraction and disturbance, as the ancient liturgies testify, in which there is repeated, *Have mercy on us*, thrice. The church, at that juncture, made this change, because she was satisfied, she could not beg for peace, any where more effectually than in the sacrifice of the Mass. In Mass for the dead, there is said, instead of either, *Grant them rest*, because they are neither in sin, nor stand in need of the peace we beg for.

In solemn Mass, after another prayer is said, to beg of Christ

peace, union, and charity among the faithful, which is the great preparation for communion, the priest kisses the altar, to signify that he receives peace from Christ, and gives it to the deacon, to transmit to all the faithful present. So this sacrament is called communion, or the sacrament of peace and union: for all animosities, quarrels, and uncharitableness, are so great hindrances to a worthy communion, that our Saviour says, "If thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath any thing against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift." (Matt. v. 23, 24.) Alas! dear Christians, how can we be united to Christ, when we are not united to one another? Or, how can we receive communion, when we have none in our hearts? After he has said two more prayers, to prepare himself for receiving, he kneels and adores the sacrament, (as he always does when he has any occasion to touch it,) then he takes the host into his hands, and considering it to be his Lord whom he is to receive, he puts his trust entirely in his mercy, saying, "I will take this heavenly bread, and call upon the name of the Lord." Then, as his immediate preparation, he repeats the Centurion's prayer thrice over, whose humility was so acceptable to the Son of God, that he was pleased to honor his house with his presence: "Lord, I am not worthy that you shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed." Matt. viii. 8.) In receiving the body, as also the blood, he makes the sign of the cross over them, to signify that it is the same body that was crucified, which he receives, and says, "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul unto life everlasting. Amen."

In former times, as many as heard Mass, usually so many communicated; but, alas! now-a-days, as the fervor is abated, so the like dispositions are now generally wanting: however, it is a very advantageous devotion, and highly commendable, for as many as are in the state of grace, to communicate spiritually, as often as

they hear Mass. You may perform it in this manner: A little before the priest communicates, make a small recollection of your failings, and ask God pardon for them, seriously resolving to avoid them for the future. Then, when the priest receives, receive you in spirit, that is, earnestly desire to receive your Lord and Saviour; and, no doubt, in proportion to your devotion you will receive a blessing from this your communion. When we are very hungry, we, as I may say, even devour our meat with our eyes; so, had we an ardent desire of this heavenly food, we should carefully prepare ourselves, and often receive it in our wishes, saying those words which Job pronounces on another occasion, "Who will give us of his flesh, that we may be filled?" (Job xxxi. 31.) Those who have reason to fear themselves in mortal sin, must only humble themselves, and wish they were worthy.

After the communion the priest washes his fingers that touched the blessed sacrament, and the chalice wherein it was contained, saying, "Grant, O Lord, that what we have taken with our mouth, we may receive with pure minds, and that of a temporal gift it may become an everlasting remedy." And adding another prayer to the same effect, he returns to the right corner of the altar, which represents the just, (for such we should be after communion,) he says some prayers in thanksgiving for the great blessings received; he turns to the people and salutes them twice with *Dominus vobiscum*, Our Lord be with you; and then he tells them they may depart, the Mass is ended, *Ite missa est;* or if it be in time of penance, he says, *Benedicamus Domino*, Let us bless our Lord; for on penitential days, formerly the people did not depart immediately after Mass, but continued some time in prayer after it was ended. Then he turns to the altar, and says, "Accept, O holy Trinity, this oblation of my duty, and grant that this sacrifice, though presented to thy divine majesty by my unworthy hands, may be acceptable to thee, and propitiatory to me, and to all others for whom I have offered it, through

Christ our Lord." Then, kissing the altar to receive God's blessing, he turns about and blesses the people, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

In the old law God said to the priests, "And they shall invoke my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." (Numb. vi. 27.) This blessing represents that last blessing our Saviour gave to his blessed mother, the apostles, and all the faithful, who were gathered about him on Mount Olivet, when he ascended into heaven: "lifting up his hands," says the scripture, "he blessed them, and was carried up to heaven." This blessing as it regards only the living, so it is omitted in Mass for the dead, and there it is only said, "Let them rest in peace."

Or it represents that last blessing, which he will give to his elect at the day of judgment, when he will say to them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom that hath been prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

At the end of all is usually said St. John's gospel, wherein is clearly expressed the divinity of our Saviour, to teach us, that the end of this holy mystery of the Mass, is to make us happy for ever, by a visible participation of the divinity, which in this adorable sacrament is concealed under the veils of bread and wine; but so accommodated to the weakness of our mortality, that they may feed and nourish us to a glorious immortality.

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Honor thy Father and thy Mother.—Exod. xx. 12.

THE commandments were written by the hand of God, on two tables of stone; because the whole law, and our entire duty, is contained in two precepts, the *love of God*, and our *neighbor*. In the first table were engraven the first three commandments, which

declare, and deliver to us our duty to God; the keeping or breaking of them is a clear proof of our respect or disrespect for him: these I have already explained. In the other table were written the seven last, and express our duty to our neighbor. From our complying or not complying with these, we may judge of the disposition of our hearts towards him, as also towards God, who has laid the command upon us. The mutual duty of children to parents, and parents to children, as it is the highest obligation, so it has the first place in this table. *Honor thy father and thy mother.* To comprehend our whole duty, we must know who they are that are signified by the name of parents, and what is meant by honoring of them. First, then, by parents are understood our fathers and mothers, those from whom, next under God, we have received our lives. "He that feareth the Lord," says the wise man, (Eccl. iii. 8.) "honoreth his parents, and will serve them as his masters, that brought him into the world."

Secondly. The prelates and pastors of God's church are called Fathers, because through them we have received the life of grace, and have been adopted amongst the children of God. "I write not these things to confound you, (says St. Paul, 1 Cor. iv. 14, 15.) but I admonish you as my dearest children; for if you had ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus by the gospel I have begotten you."

Thirdly; By Father is meant all lawful superiors, the civil magistrate, with all who derive their power from him; who govern the commonwealth under God, and from him have power over our civil lives. Thus Naaman, who was one of the chief rulers, is called father by his servants: "Father, (say they, 4 Reg. v.) had the prophet commanded you some great matter, you ought certainly to have done it."

Fourthly. All those are called Fathers, who have any authority over us, to whose care, trust and wisdom we are committed, as guardians tutors, masters, &c. upon this account, as we read in the fourth book of Kings, (chap. xiv) Elias and Eliseus were

called fathers, not only by the children of the prophets, but by the Kings of Israel themselves: "Behold, I know that your brother Simon, (says Mathathias, 1 Mac. ii. 65.) is a man of counsel, give ear to him always, and he shall be a Father to you."

Lastly. Aged persons who are virtuous, usually deserve this name; and therefore, the apostle says, in his first epistle to Timothy, (chap. v. 1.) "An ancient man rebuke not; but intreat him as a father."

Now all these, as they deserve the name of father, so in regard of the authority they have over us, and the care, they have for us, they ought to be honored by us. But those chiefly are to be respected, who by nature are our fathers; and not only they, but our mothers also, as is expressly mentioned in holy writ, that we may never forget our duty and gratitude to her for the care, solicitude, and concern she had for us, even before we were born, as well as in our tender age and riper years. So holy Tobias, upon his death-bed, in his last admonitions to his son, "Thou shalt honor thy mother," says he, (Tob. iv. 3, 4.) "all the days of her life; for thou must be mindful what and how great perils she suffered for thee in her womb."

And the like instruction the Holy Ghost gives us: (Eccl. vii. 29, 30.) "Honor thy father, and forget not the groanings of thy mother. Remember that thou hadst not been born but through them; and make a return to them as they have done for thee." It is evident then, that children are to honor their parents. But how is this to be done? I will tell you: Almighty God does not say, Love your parents, or stand in awe of your parents, or, what is more, be obedient to your parents; but he says, Honor your parents, an expression that includes all love, fear and obedience. For when we honor any person from our heart, we esteem and love them, and set a value upon every thing that belongs to them. Again, whom we truly honor, we also fear, not servilely out of any apprehension of punishment, but out of inclination, we fear to displease or disoblige them. Lastly, whom we really

honor, we do not only obey with ease, but with affection: it is a pleasure to obey them. God therefore obliges children to honor their parents, to love them, to fear them, and obey them. All these have their several branches, from whence we may draw the duty of children.

Though I am well satisfied the undutifulness of children does but too often proceed from their parent's fault, who, either out of too much fondness omit all necessary correction, indulging them in all their childish humors, for fear of losing their affection; or out of a great neglect of instruction and discipline, they leave them to nature, which soon grows up into stubbornness, disobedience, and vice. However, though parents are so unhappy as to omit their duty, children ought not to neglect theirs.

First then, they must love their parents, not only out of a natural affection, but for God, and in God. It is true, he is to be loved above all things: but next unto him your parents require your greatest love; because, next to God, you have received the greatest blessings from them, viz., your very lives and substance, even what you are as well as what you have: and if providence adds to your native fortune, this ought not to diminish, but increase your respect to them; and this virtuous children never fail to do. Joseph, the patriarch's son, as we read in the book of Genesis, (chap. xlvi.) though raised to the dignity of viceroy of all Egypt, had no sooner heard his father was coming to him, but he took his chariot, and went to meet him; and when he saw him, cast himself upon his knees, and mixed his embraces with his tears; his high dignity had not raised him above his duty, nor the meanness of his father's condition in the least lessened his respect. The like respectful behavior we find in Solomon, the wisest of kings, who, as we read in the third book of Kings, (chap. ii.) when his mother came, he rose from his throne to meet her; he placed her on a royal throne, and she sat on his right hand. His great wisdom had taught him his duty and his respectful piety made him readily perform it.

Hence we may conclude, that all those children are failing in their duty, who retain in their hearts a disrespect to their parents, upon the account of any personal failing; or more, if they shew it in their words, looks, or behavior; but most of all, if they expose in public their ill-humors, their peevish disposition, the weakness of their understanding, the imprudence of their actions, or their evil ways. Children ought to govern their hearts, words, and actions, by their duty, and not by their parents' folly. They must look through their faults, and observe the image of God in them, who has made them the authors and instruments of the very life they have. With all their faults they are your parents; with all their faults you are still their children; and, as such you owe them all honor and respect. But for them you had never been; render then honor to them who gave life to you. Tobias's wife had not the reputation of sanctity, nor Solomon's mother an untainted character; yet Tobias commands his son to honor his mother all her life, and Solomon never failed in this respect to his. Children then ought to shew a respect to parents in words, behavior, and attendance; they ought to shew a true desire to please them, a real trouble when they are displeased, and a great tenderness for them, especially when they advance in years. They ought also to say or do nothing they know will vex them, and always to ask them pardon, when they have unadvisedly given them any occasion of anger, or trouble; neither ought they obstinately to hold disputes with them, but rather to yield, though they think themselves in the right. This, and all this they will do, if they really honor their parents.

A second duty of children is, to pray for their parents, and to beg of God for them a long, happy, and peaceable life; and that his grace may support them in their difficulties, direct their ways, and crown their labors with eternal bliss: and this also they will not fail to perform, if they really honor and love them. If this be their duty, as certainly it is, what a crime then are they guilty of, who, instead of honoring, curse their parents? Who

wish evil and death to those who have given them life? "He that curseth his father or mother, dying let him die," says Almighty God. Lev. xx. 9. And they, doubtless, are paracides in their hearts, who desire their parents' death, to enjoy their estate, or means. "He that curseth his father and mother," says Solomon, (Prov. xx. 20, 21.) "his lamp shall be put out in the midst of darkness;" and in the following words adds, "The inheritance gotten hastily in the beginning, in the end shall be without a blessing." Such evil and untimely wishes draw down the anger of God upon wicked children: and provoke him but too often, not only to prevent the temporal enjoyment they unjustly desire, but also to put out their lamp in the midst of darkness, that is, to take away their undeserved life in the midst of their sins.

It is your duty then to honor, love, and pray for your parents; to shew no disrespect either in words, or looks, much less ought you to wish any evil to them. But this is not all; you must also obey your parents, and this in all things that are consistent with the law of God; for, as he is our chief and principal father, all commands that contradict his are void, and of no force; so whensoever these interfere, we are obliged, as St. Paul says, "to obey God rather than man." You are then to obey them, and to obey them cheerfully, without grumbling or muttering; as you are to receive reprehensions and correction with submission, neither swelling out of pride, or being sullen out of stubbornness. For, whatever your inclinations or difficulties are, you must compose yourselves, and seem easy in the practice of your obedience; and this, I am sure, you will not fail to do, if you truly honor and respect your parents. "My son," says Solomon, (Prov. i. 8, 9.) "hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother; that grace may be added to thy head, and a chain of gold to thy neck." Grace and gold, the blessings of heaven and earth, are powerful means to make you easy in your duty, and here you see they are faithfully promised.

"Children, (says St. Paul. Ephes. vi. 1.) obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just:" and again, in his epistle to the Colossians, (chap. iii. 20.) "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord." And in two other epistles, (Ad. Rom. ii. 2. 2 Tim. iii.) he reckons disobedience to parents amongst the abominations of the Gentiles, of which Christians ought to have an horror.

Those pious children, who regard in their parents the authority of their Heavenly Father, put no other bounds to their obedience, than what the law of God does; and therefore obey entirely in all that is not sin, for certainly the great mark of a child's piety is his obedience. And indeed, if it be just, as certainly it is, to obey those in whose dominions we are born, or whom the laws of nations, conquest, or own choice, has made our sovereigns, with how much greater reason ought we to obey those to whom God, nature, and our very being have made us subject? And this not only in our childhood, but more in our riper years, (excepting only where duty to a husband, or respect to a wife, are inconsistent with a parent's desire,) for as we advance in wisdom and knowledge, we should increase in piety and duty. So we read of our Saviour Christ, the pattern of all virtue, that he was obedient to his parents, not only till he was twelve years of age, but after that we find in St. Luke, (c. ii. 51.) that he went down to Nazareth, and was subject to them. This, I say, we read of him, and only this, from that time till he was thirty years of age; to convince us, that our obedience to parents is our great and continual duty, and extremely pleasing to God, as being the fountain and ground of all filial piety.

A fourth duty of children is, to imitate the virtuous example of their parents; for we naturally desire to be like those we honor and respect. Hereupon Christ replied to the Jews, who valued themselves for their parentage from Abraham, (John, viii. 39.) "If you be the children of Abraham, (says he,) do the works of Abraham;" imitate what you admire, live as he lived.

A fifth duty of children is, in all their difficulties and business of concern, to consult with their parents, to ask their advice, and to take it; unless it be contrary to the honor of God, or a hazard to their soul's salvation, or the perfection of the gospel; and, above all, their council is necessary, when they deliberate about a state of life: when they think of engaging in marriage, and to enter upon a settlement for life. Parents are generally wiser, more cautious, and better experienced in the world than children are, and usually provide better for them than they can do for themselves. So we read in Genesis, (xxiv. and xxviii.) that the great patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob, took wives of their parent's choosing. And indeed herein so much prudence and precaution is necessary, that young persons need more eyes than their own, to see and prevent the many difficulties and hazards, both temporal and eternal, which we daily see too many cast themselves into, and often past recovery. They need better heads than their own, to make the best of their circumstances, to take care for some settlement for themselves, and provision for their children, and, what is above all to be regarded, some security for their own children's souls: whose eternal happiness is but too often sacrificed to the interest or passion of a parent.

Those, therefore, that by their marriage, put themselves out of circumstances of bringing up their children in the way of salvation, highly offend God, by acting directly contrary to the end for which he instituted marriage, which was to people earth, only that you might people heaven, and bring forth as many to salvation as you do to life. If parents have so little sense of God and religion, as to propose matches for their children with such as are out of the church, children are not obliged to obey them, because they ought to hear God rather than man, because they ought not to hazard their own, or any of their children's salvation, to please any parent whatsoever.

Besides, children as long as they are under a parent's care, ought to consult with them about the choice of their company,

divertisements, visits, and employments, and to do nothing in any of those which their parents have forbid, or which they know will be a grief and trouble to them.

A sixth duty of children is, to assist parents in their necessities, both spiritual and temporal, as far as they are able. As to spirituals, if a child knows his parent to be subject to any evil custom, to detain unjustly what belongs to others, or to abandon the care of their soul; though reprehension be far from becoming or allowable in a child, yet if they know their temper will bear it, they may make, with all possible respect, a submissive remonstrance, propose the danger of their circumstances, and desire them to consider it. Or, if this be not likely to succeed, they may advise with some person, whose prudence and authority may carry more weight, and prove more effectual. But if no remedy can be found by such means, children are not to bear all with patience, for they must not neglect their duty, though parents are so unhappy as not to do theirs. But as to temporal assistance, there is no restraint; children's obligation goes as far as their ability, when parents are in want. They must assist and relieve, and never abandon them in their age, infirmities or poverty. We have a great example of this filial piety, in the virtuous young Tobias, who, by the labor of his hands, and the sweat of his brow, maintained his aged father, struck blind by a providential accident, and the blessing of God afterwards attended his piety. And we have a far nobler example in the person of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who, ready to expire on the cross, forgot not this filial duty, but recommended his mother to his beloved apostle, St. John, interrupting, as I may say, for a moment, that great sacrifice, to take care of her. Herein, says St. Augustin, (Tract 115 in Joan.) recommending to all pious children the care of their parents: and it was from thence, says he, St. Paul learned that doctrine he taaght us in his first epistle to Timothy: (v. 8.) "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infi-

del." Now, who can be nearer, or more allied, than children to parents? Christ practised what he taught, and left us this example of his doctrine: he considered not his mother as his creature, to whom he had given life, but as his parent who had given him birth; and since he must leave her, he recommends her, as it were, to another son, *Woman behold thy son!*

"Honor thy father and mother," says St. Ambrose, (L. viii. in Luc.) "and when they want, provide for them that have provided for you." Assist thy father, and feed thy mother, and when thou hast done this, thou hast not satisfied for half that she has done for thee: feed thy mother, and when thou hast done this, thou hast made no return for the sorrow and pains she endured for thee: when thou hast done this, thou makest a small recompense for the many times she fed thee at her breast, and the many days thou hast made her fast: feed thy mother, and when thou hast done this, thou hast made no return for the bitter medicines she has taken, disagreeable to her inclination, when she thought them proper for thee. Consider the nights she has watched, and the hours she has wept, when she found thou wert ill, and canst thou see her want? What judgment must thou expect if thou dost? If you see them in want, from whom you have had your life and being, how will you be able to answer it before the author of all life.

Have you not heard how the rich man in the gospel, who was clothed in silk and purple, and kept a plentiful table, whereof Lazarus would have been glad to have picked up the crumbs, is now burning in hell for not feeding the poor? If it be such a crime then to omit the relief of strangers, how much greater is it to neglect the care of your parents? Do not say, like some of the Jews, whom Christ severely reprehended, that you will give to the church what you deny to them, for God desires no presents of your parents' wants.

The last duty of children is, to assist their parents when they lie dangerously sick, under the apprehension of death, and to

provide according to their circumstances, for the health of their bodies, and much more for the good of their souls; in this last distress, and where eternity is at stake, they are incapable of helping themselves, and therefore, now, more than ever, need the assistance of their children, to take care that in time they be provided with all things necessary for a happy departure out of this life, and that they have the sacraments before they come to extremity. Then after that, to pray by them, to read to them good books, and often to put them in mind of the mercies of God, and the comforts of another world. In fine, to execute carefully their last wills, and to pray for them when dead.

These are some of the chief duties of children to parents, which God, nature, and their very being has imposed upon them. As those wicked disobedient children, who neglect these duties, cannot but expect a severe judgment from Almighty God, so those pious ones, who carefully comply with them, have reason to expect the promise for which the word of God is engaged, viz., length of days in the land he has assigned for them.

DISCOURSE II.

ON THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Honor thy Father and thy Mother.—Exod. xx. 12.

In the last discourse, I laid down the duty of children towards their parents; what therefore I intend in this, is, to explain to you the duty and obligation of parents towards their children.

The first duty of parents to their children, with regard to their education, is love. To bring them up well is to love them well; for we always take care of what we love. If you love them much, you will take great care of them; if you love them but a little, your care of them will be but little; if you love them judiciously, your care will be prudent; if you love them indis-

creetly, your care will be blind and indiscreet. Now, it is certain, the love of fathers and mothers towards their children, ought to be very judicious, nothing requiring more discretion than the government of children.

Nature is a sort of tyrant upon parents, it presses them sometimes to too great love, which runs to excess, if it be not well governed. How must it be governed? How must we love our children? Dear Christians, I cannot give you a better rule than to tell you, that you must love them as God loves us. He loves us, and therefore he provides not only for our natural, but also our supernatural being; for our subsistence in this life, and our eternal happiness in the next; and this last cost him the most care and pains.

Now it is by this rule you must guide and govern your affections; it is from this fire you must kindle yours. You love your children, and therefore you labor to provide for them, according to your circumstances and theirs; and herein you do very well, provided this care be moderate, and kept within the bounds of justice to your neighbor, and charity to yourselves; that it put you not upon unwarrantable methods that may prejudice your conscience to the ruin of your souls; for what comfort will it be, to have your children rich and prosperous in the world, whilst you burn in hell? To have them flow in pleasures and jollity, whilst you groan under an eternity of torments? What you leave them, therefore, let it be got by just means, then it will be a lasting comfort to you, and prosper the better with them.

In this natural love of parents to their children, we find two great extremes; the one runs to an excessive fondness, the other into a great neglect of them. Some indiscreet, passionate mothers are so fond of their children, that they comply with them almost in every thing they can wish or propose, little considering the ill consequences of this yielding method, how, by this indiscreet passion, they contribute to the ruin of those whom they brought forth for eternal life.

The pelicans, it is said, love their young ones more than other birds; the passionate hen in her brooding, out of an excess of kindness, presses them so close to the nest, that they are stifled; and thus the whole species would be lost, did not the male come sometimes, and finding the condition his little ones are in, strike his breast with his beak, and let out his warm blood upon them, which soon revives and recovers them.

If this story be true, it is a very natural emblem of the blind and passionate love of some mothers, who may be truly said to ruin their children through a strange, indiscreet fondness: because they love them, they humor them in every thing; the children must command, and the parents obey; they must propose, and the parents execute; what faults soever they commit, they must be concealed or excused; and whenever the danger of correction threatens from another hand, they run to a mother's arms, and are sure to find protection; and this continues so long, till a corrupt nature, and their passions would bring them into inevitable ruin, did not sometimes the more discreet love of a father prevent it by seasonable care; if it costs him not his blood to retrieve his lost children, it costs him much trouble; and he meets with great opposition from them, and more from an indiscreet wife.

On the other hand, we see, there are other parents as neglectful of their children as these are fond; they are great lovers of themselves, but have little regard to those who are a part of themselves; they will take care to provide money for their pleasure and sports abroad, whatever comes of their helpless families at home. These are like ostriches, which the scripture say, (Job xxxix. 61.) are hard-hearted to their young ones, as if they were not theirs. These birds when they have laid their eggs abandon them in the desert, leaving them in the sand, to be hatched by the sun, exposing them to be trod upon, or destroyed by beasts.

There are ostriches amongst Christians as well as in the desert; unnatural fathers, who leave their families to shift for themselves,

whilst they squander away in drink and sports, the money that should be their present maintenance, and future provision: and thus, sometimes their poor children come to be brought up by the parish, or the charity of a friend; which in parents is inhuman and unnatural.

These two extremes, then, ought carefully to be avoided: an immoderate fondness, that is always blind, and tends to the ruin of those they have not the least design to prejudice; and a great neglect, which is no less than cruelty, when, to gratify an immoderate passion, they abandon their own bowels, fool and sot away what might maintain them handsomely when little, and put them out creditably as they grow up.

The love of parents then must be discreet; but that is not all, it must be likewise Christian; they must, like our good God, provide for their supernatural, as well as their natural being; they must temper their love, not only with reason, but also with religion, that they may give their children, a Christian, as well as a commendable education. The chief concern that ought to lie upon parents, is the care of their children's souls, to fit them for heaven, more than earth: you must take great care, therefore, that they learn their prayers, and be early instructed in the Christian doctrine that the knowledge of Jesus Christ and his gospel may grow up with them; without this all other care is to little purpose.

You must also be very watchful to keep them out of ill-company, and from ill-books, that they drink not in poison by their ears or eyes; and that their present diversions lay not a foundation for their future ruin. In fine, you must be careful to let no stubbornness, ill-humors, violent passion, fretfulness, &c. take root in them: these ill-weeds will be sure to spring up from a corrupt nature, but they will not do them much prejudice, if they be weeded out as soon as they appear.

This is Christian love, and such as will discharge your obligations before God and men, and be your own as well as children's

salvation. But besides, considering the proneness of our nature to evil, and the heedlessness of young minds, that runs them into many faults, you will scarce succeed in these particulars without much pains and seasonable correction.

A second means to the good education of children. I confess natural love makes this duty somewhat difficult to parents, if it be not overruled by grace; for as your children are part of yourselves, you can scarce make them smart, but it will return upon, and make your heart ache; yet, if you use this violence to nature, out of a sense of your duty to God, and your children's good, you will draw many blessings upon yourselves and them; and you may deserve happily to hear from God, what the great patriarch Abraham did upon such an occasion: "Because thou hast been faithful, and hast not spared thy only son for me, I will bless thee and thy posterity.

Besides, Almighty God obliges children by a special command, to honor and obey their parents; and will not you correct them when they are wanting in their duty to you, and so disobey and offend God? Herein, should not you be as just to him, as he is to you? Nay, he spared not his only Son for your sake, but preferred your salvation before his life; and shall you spare your own child, when the sparing of him may hazard his salvation?

Correction, then, and reproofs, are necessary for children, but they must be given with moderation and prudence; a parent's hand must be guided by a parent's heart; and be sure, I say again, that your duty, and not passion, fetch the rod. Never correct a child till your anger, in some measure, be over.

As in love, so in correction, there are extremes. An indiscreet fondness can never find a fit time for correction: and a natural harshness never knows when to have done. As these have almost always the stick or the rod in their hands, so they seldom are without a plague, and the devil, in their mouths: this is very discouraging, as well as unedifying to their children, and causes them to be hard-hearted, and to love any company

better than their parents. Let correction then be given, but always with temper and moderation, that a child may see a parent's love and duty in what he suffers, and then it will be most successful.

But there is still another obligation which must crown a parent's care, and that is, to give a good example to their children. The most that children learn, they learn from their parents, because their ordinary conversation is with them; and because as they love them the best, they observe them the most. Thus we see they soon take their very air and mien, and sooner inherit their manners, than their means. It is therefore of great consequence, that parents let their children see nothing in them, or hear nothing from them, but what deserves their imitation. Young minds have little knowledge of their own, the most they get is from what they hear and see. And happy would they be could they hear or see nothing amiss, at least from their parents

It is a wise saying of an ancient author, that a reverential regard is due to children; that is, we ought to be cautious, and upon our guard, what we say or do in the presence of children, that we leave no ill-impressions in their minds, which they may imbibe and practice upon occasions. "Madam," says St. Hierom, writing to a Roman lady that consulted him upon the education of her daughter, "take care she see nothing in you, or her father, which if she imitates, she may offend God."

If, therefore, you love your children, and desire their eternal salvation, take the advice of this holy doctor: let not your children see you in any violent passion that breaks out into oaths and imprecation; for if they imitate you in this, you know they will offend God. Let them never hear any dishonest word or lie from your mouth; for, if they imitate you in this, you know they will offend God. Let them never see in you any backwardness or negligence in the service of God; for, if they imitate you in this, you know they will offend God. Let them not be witness to your uncharitableness, your animosities and

quarrels, for they will receive the impressions, enter into your quarrels, and so offend God.

It is in your power to draw the picture of a saint, or a devil before your children's eyes, and make them in love with either; because it is in your power to leave what impressions you please in their minds, according to the good or bad example you give them. If you are failing then in this great duty, and thereby promote the ruin, instead of the salvation of your children, what a judgment may not you expect from our common Father?

Think not so much on the difficulty of this task, as on the eternal reward it will procure both for you and them.

DISCOURSE III.

ON THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Honor thy father and thy mother.—Exod. xx. 12.

In the two last discourses upon this commandment, I shewed you, dear Christians, the duty of children to parents, and of parents to children, which certainly is great on both sides; their mutual salvation, in a great measure, depending upon it. It is without dispute parents have a great charge upon their hands, and much to answer for the care of their children when young, and for the due education of them when they grow up, suitable to their circumstances and capacity.

And children's respect and duty ought to answer their parent's care, trouble, and charge, if they expect any blessing from their common Father in heaven and on earth. Thus both have their obligations, wherein, if they be faithful, they shall have their reward; but if they be wanting, they must expect their just punishment.

The reward Almighty God promises to dutiful children, is a long and happy life both here and hereafter, in this world, and

the world to come. This, dear Christians, is a great promise, and such as deserves your serious consideration; it includes three blessings; the first, a long life upon earth; secondly, a happy life; and thirdly, a long and blessed life in heaven, nothing less than a happy eternity.

That their lives shall be long, evidently follows from the words of this commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother," says Almighty God, "that thou mayest be long lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee." (Exod. xx.) That these shall be not only long, but also happy days, follows evidently from the nature of the promise, which is a reward assigned to filial piety. Certainly a long life, if we were not happy, would be so far from being a blessing to us, that it would only be a punishment; and the longer the life the greater the punishment. God then promising a long life, as a reward and temporal blessing, promises at the same time a happy life. And this also, Moses clearly expresses, when he repeats the commandments to the people, and adds these words to the promise, "That it may be well with thee in the land, which the Lord thy God will give thee." (Deut. v. 16.) Saint Paul (Ephes. vi. 2.) also takes notice of it: "Honor thy father and thy mother," says he; this is the first commandment to which God has promised a reward. And what is this reward? He tells us in the next verse, "That it may be well with thee," says he, "and thou mayest be long lived upon earth." Dutiful children then shall have a long and happy life in this world. This is clear from the holy text, and it would be impiety not to credit it.

Now this reward is very properly assigned to such as keep this commandment, such as truly honor their parents for this reason. Because it is but just, that such should have a benefit continued to them, as long as possible, who retain a grateful memory of it, and truly honor their benefactors. So it is but reasonable, that such pious children, who by honoring their parents shew themselves grateful to those from whom, next under

God, they have received their lives, should be blessed with long lives; and have them continued and prolonged to them as long as possible, for which they prove so grateful.

On the contrary, by the same rule, it is but fit that those children who abuse the blessing of the life they have, by being injurious to those who gave it, should be as quickly deprived of it for misusing the blessing to the injury of the giver.

Honor, therefore, your fathers and mothers, that it may be well with you, and that your days may be long in the land, which the Lord your God will give you.

Observe, dear Christians, there are two great blessings, promised you by him who cannot fail in the performance, temporal happiness, and a continuance of it, if you be dutiful. Happiness is what charms the world, what all earnestly desire, and generally seek after; so universally valued, that nothing can beat down the price, or lessen the worth in the minds of worldly men, but the uncertainty of life and the shortness of its duration; but when you are secured against both these, when you have a promise, above distrust, of length of life, and length of happiness, what a treasure have you found?

This, indeed, is great, and was all that was promised to the Jews, who as they were a worldly, carnal people, they were to be drawn into duty by worldly and temporal ends; such as might work on their senses, and gratify their present inclinations. But to the Christians he has yet added a farther, a nobler reward, length of happiness, and length of days in the land of the living, in heaven itself. God denies us not the temporal blessings I speak of, being sensible that worldly motives work upon Christians as well as upon Jews, though they have a far more valuable prospect in their eye, and that interest is generally a spur to virtue. But he adds over and above what is temporal, an eternity of happiness, and so promises to reward filial piety, both in this life and in the life to come.

And this I prove, not only from the clear and repeated promises

of Christ in the gospel, of life everlasting to such as keep the commandments, of which the sacred text is full, but in particular from the clear testimony of St. Paul in regard of this commandment, in his first epistle to Timothy: (ch. iv. 8.) "For bodily exercise is profitable to little; but godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Happy then those pious children who honor their parents, not in their exterior behavior only, but from their hearts; looking upon them as the instruments God has made use of to bestow upon them the very life they enjoy; this grateful use of it will purchase for you the blessings of this life, as St. Paul assures, and also of the life to come, what earth can bestow on you now, and what heaven reserves for you hereafter.

Do you desire a long life, not of crosses and afflictions, such as the world is full of, but of happiness and content, such as few find? If you do, honor your parents, and honor them from your heart, you shall have it. Be respectful in your words, and dutiful in your actions. Let your behavior to them testify your esteem of them. Keep company with those they assign you; and be careful to avoid all those they forbid you. Do what they order you, not only carefully, but cheerfully, without muttering, or shewing any dislike to their commands; hearken to their advice as you would do to that of God, who, doubtless, speaks to you by them. He has taken them into a share of his government, and put you under their care and rule; you may be sure then, whensoever you follow the advice he gives you by them, he will give a blessing to it.

But do not imagine, that all happiness, (I mean worldly happiness,) consists in riches and wealth; no, the richest are not always the happiest; all their wealth cannot always buy content. There is a happiness in living out of the wants of the world with a contented mind. So the wisest of men prayed God to give him neither riches, nor poverty, but only necessaries for life.

There is a happiness in living in peace, unity, and love, though they have but a little. "With three things my spirit is pleased," says Ecclesiasticus, (xxv. 1, 2.) which are approved before God and men. "The concord of brethren, and the love of neighbors, and man and wife, that agree well together." There is also a worldly happiness in a good conscience, so that the scripture calls it (Prov. xv. 13.) "a continual feast."

However, this is certain, if you be dutiful you shall have a long and happy life. God has promised it, his word is engaged for it, and he will not, he cannot, be worse than his word. He is not one that says and does not, that promises and performs not; no, no, he is honorable in his word, he is just to what he says: be you but faithful in your duty, and you shall not want one tittle of your promised reward, both here and hereafter.

I may add, out of holy scripture, in confirmation of this truth, many examples of pious and respectful children, who being blessed by their dying parents, God himself owned and confirmed the blessing to them, bestowing on them whatever happiness their parents bequeathed unto them. Witness the blessings of Jacob, both temporal and eternal, left him as a legacy by Isaac his dying father, and confirmed by God, as we read in Genesis, (chap xxvii.) Witness the blessings of Sem and Japheth, as we read in the ninth chapter of the same book, (verse 26.); Almighty God afterwards bestowing on them those favors, and that happiness, which Noah, their father, left them with his last breath. Witness the blessings of Ephraim and Manasses, and all the twelve patriarchs; who, as they were all blessed by Jacob, God bestowed on each respectively, the blessing their father left them; and the holy text stands an undeniable record of all this.

Whereupon the wise man earnestly presses all children to be respectful to their parents, that they may deserve their father's blessing. "Honor thy father, in work and word, and all patience, that a blessing may come upon thee from him, and his blessing may remain in the latter end. The father's blessing, says he,

establisheth the house (or family) of the children, but the mother's curse rooteth up the foundation." Eccles. iii. 9, 10, 11.

What powerful motives have you here to honor your parents! since we read (they are the words of St. Ambrose, Lib. de Benedic. Patriarc. c. 1.) in the word of God. That he who was blessed by his father, was blessed by God; and he who was cursed by his father, was cursed by God. He has granted this particular favor to parents, to be powerful motives to engage their children in their duty; think often, therefore, on this prerogative of your father, that it may work upon a churlish nature. Though your father be poor, and have no great inheritance to leave you, do not be less respectful upon that account, for he has the inheritance of his last blessing, at least, to leave you, and it is much better to have the blessing of virtue than of riches; for even a contented poverty is a treasure upon earth, and the more valuable, as being an effectual means to gain treasure in heaven, according to the saying of our Saviour, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. v. 3.

Nay, you shall have treasure too upon earth, and what is more valuable, you shall have dutiful children, if you choose the married state; both these blessings are expressly named in Ecclesiasticus now cited. "He that honoreth his mother," says Almighty God, "is as one that layeth up a treasure; he that honoreth his father shall have joy in his own children, and in the day of his prayer he shall be heard," (Eccles. iii. 5, 6.) as if God said, you have an easy way to grow rich; honor but your mother, and my eyes shall be on your little stock, and I will give such a blessing to all you have, and all you do, that plenty shall follow you. Again, if you honor your father, you shall have joy in your children, which will be your greatest comfort, if ever you settle in the world; the same respectful return you make to those from whom you have received your life, shall be rendered back to you by those to whom you give life; and lastly, you shall be heard in the day of prayer. You see, dear Christians, this filial

duty, so engages Almighty God to you, that he promises to hear your prayers, and grant your just requests.

If you think these to be conveniences and desirable blessings, honor your father and mother.

There remains only one difficulty, which may be raised against this doctrine so well established in the word of God, which is this. Though we cannot see into the heart of man, yet we have great reason to think, that many pious and respectful children never see old age, but die in their youth. This, dear Christians, is true; yet in this case as St. Thomas teaches, and also the catechism of the council of Trent, God does not deny these blessings, but gives them a greater. He sees them pious and dutiful in their youth, and he takes them to himself in their innocence, foreseeing, that if they lived longer, they would be corrupted by ill example, and the wicked advice of graceless companions. Here God is not worse than his word, but much better; it is far more desirable to die in the flower of youth and innocence, than to grow grey in wickedness; so he mercifully takes their lives before they leave the path of virtue. And this we read in the book of wisdom, where Almighty God, speaking of the death of a virtuous youth, says, "That he was taken away lest malice should change his understanding, and lest deceit should beguile his soul: for the bewitching of vanity obscureth good things, and the inconstancy of concupiscence perverts the understanding, that is yet without malice." (Sap. iv.) And, indeed, it is not many days, but many good ones, that makes us old with God; no years, but those that are spent in his service, and employed to the end for which life was given us, enter into his account. So it is not to be old in years, but in virtue, that is the blessing of God. Alas! but too many are grey before they are good, and far from being old in God. But an unblemished life is truly old age, as the same scriptures assure us Sap. iv. 9.

Besides, there are two other reasons, why virtuous children

are taken out of the world in a tender age, as the same catechism observes. First—When Almighty God designs to chastise a wicked generation for their crimes, he takes pious and innocent children to himself, out of the corrupted mass, lest in the public calamities and miseries of their country, their virtue should stagger, and their salvation be in danger.

Secondly—They are taken away, that they may not see and conceive an excessive grief at the general misfortune and ruin of their relations and friends. And this is also what Almighty God says, (Isai. lvii. 1.) "From the face of malice the just is gathered away." So we have reason to apprehend some public calamity, when the just are taken from us, not by an unprovided, but by an untimely death.

And the great reason of all this is, because the goods of this world, of what nature soever they be, whether long life, health, wealth, or the like, whatever they are in themselves, are not really such to us, but inasmuch as they contribute to our salvation, our increase in virtue, and the improvement of our souls: and, therefore, it is the great mercy of God that removes them from us, or us from them, in the days of our innocence and virtue, when he foresees the ill use we shall make of them; in that case, to cut us off in the bud by an untimely death, is the greatest blessing he can give, because it brings us sooner, and securer to our great end, our wished for happiness, the enjoyment of God himself.

DISCOURSE IV.

ON THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Honor thy Father and thy Mother. -Exod. xx. 12.

I HAVE shewed you the great promises which God makes to such children as truly honor their parents: it remains that I let

you see what punishment he inflicts upon those who are wanting in this duty; for he distributes his rewards and punishments with an impartial hand, according to our deserts or demerits.

Now, as the blessing he bestows on dutiful children is truly great, both here and hereafter, so, no doubt, the punishment he inflicts upon the disobedient and disrespectful, must be proportionable, both in this life and the next. You have seen, dear Christians, the reward promised to dutiful children: but the punishment of the undutiful is directly contrary, a short and sinful life, and a bad death. What can be more terrible?

This punishment includes a threefold misery: First, a short life. Secondly, a sinful life, and thirdly, a bad death. The first is the dread of nature; the second the want of grace; the third, the compendium of all we can call misery, excluding us from all happiness, and the hopes of it, and drawing upon our heads an eternity of torments, without hope of ever being released.

And, is all this the punishment of undutiful children? Yes, they will be cut off in the midst of their days, and in the midst of their sins; the disobedience shall meet with its just punishment. And this is sufficiently intimated to us by Almighty God, when he promises a long life to no other virtue, but our piety to our parents, and our lawful superiors, under whose care we are placed; and threatens death, over and over to such as are disobedient to their parents. "He that striketh his father or mother shall be put to death." Exod. xxi. 15. And in Leviticus, (Levit xx. 9.) "He that curseth his father or mother, dying let him die, he hath cursed his father and mother, let his blood be upon him.' The same is repeated in the nineteenth and twentieth chapter of Ecclesiastes. And what God threatens, we have reason to believe and apprehend, for he wants neither power nor will to execute what he designs, nor are there any means left us to avoid his anger; we may escape sometimes from out of the hand of human justice, but we can never fly from the face of God, he will reach us wherever we are. And, indeed, it is just we should be deprive

of the blessing we misuse to the injury of the giver; and therefore it is but fit God should shorten their days, who become stubborn, disrespectful, and abusive to those who gave them life.

If then, children, you desire a long life, and dread an untimely death, be observant and dutiful to your parents; have a care of all froward and abusive carriage, for Almighty God particularly interests himself on their side, and will doubtless, revenge their cause on your heads.

So, in the law which he gave to the Jews, he expressly ordered stubborn and disobedient children to be stoned to death: "If a man, (says Almighty God, Deut. xxi 18, &c.) have a stubborn and unruly son, who will not hear the commandments of his father or mother, and being corrected, slighteth obedience; they shall take him and bring him to the ancients of his city, and to the gate of judgment, and shall say to them, This our son is rebellious and stubborn, he slighteth hearing our admonitions, he giveth himself to revelling, and to debauchery and banquetings. The people of the city shall stone him, and he shall die, that you may take away the evil out of the midst of you, and all Israel hearing it, may be afraid." This was the law Almighty God made, and the punishment he assigned for undutiful children.

He foresaw, notwithstanding the impressions of that nature, which we bring with us into the world, of loving and respecting those of whom we are a part, and whose very nature we share, there would be stubborn and disrespectful children, who would not only be regardless of their parents' advice, but despise their commands, to follow their own evil ways, the corruption of their hearts, and the persuasions of evil company, made an express law, that upon the testimony of their parents, (who were not likely to overcharge the evidence,) they should be condemned to be stoned to death; and this was not to be performed by a private executioner, but by all the people, that they all might see and take warning by so sad an example, and be deterred from the like crime: so desirous God is to raise in the minds and

hearts of all youth, a great sense of their duty to parents, and a horror of disobedience.

Though this law is not now in force, nor executed as formerly, yet disobedient children are as disagreeable to God now as they were then, and deserve the same punishment. And no doubt, by the secret judgments of God, many of them are taken away by an untimely and unprovided death, of which we make small reflection, as being ignorant of the cause.

Alas! he needs no public executioner to perform his will; and all other creatures obey him, and are ready to do justice: and as to us, it is not much matter whether he commissions the fire, water, or the sword, or any unforeseen accident, to execute his threats; or whether he orders a sudden stroke of an apoplexy, a sharp fever, a consumption, a lingering distemper, to give the last stroke, or in fine, whether he permits them to live fast and to shorten their days by their extravagant ways, and orders their own debauched lives to be their executioner; and thus we see but too many, while they gratify their inclinations, little think they execute God's justice upon, and murder themselves in the flower of their youth, or the best of their days. We may be sure God will never want means to execute the punishment he threatens to undutiful children.

But it is not only a short life, but also a sinful life, that is part of their dreadful punishment: for I am very sensible that a short life, was it joined with innocence, would be so far from being a punishment, that it would be a great blessing, being a happy means to remove us from a temporal to an eternal life; from a scene of troubles and fears to a state of security and bliss: but when a short life is also a sinful life, ah! then it is a terrible punishment to be hurried out of the world, when their judgment of virtue is weak, and their inclination to vice strong; when they have a strong bent to liberty, pleasure, and all sinful objects that flatter the senses, and a great backwardness to all that is good; and a very imperfect and distant prospect of another world. In an age

when they have a lively apprehension of all that is evil, and offends God, and but a small sense of true repentance. This, I say, is very terrible, and but too often the case of disobedient children. Their lives are not only short, but also very sinful; disobedience never goes alone; that vice has always a train after it; for children do not cast off the yoke of filial duty, but to gratify some corrupt inclination, and to add new sin to their disobedience. So whenever we find youth plunged in vice, we may conclude the breach of this commandment laid the foundation and was the first step towards a general corruption. And this the wise man observes in the person of a sinner, who sees his folly very late: "Why have I hated instruction, and my heart, (says he, Prov. v. 12, 13, 14.) consented not to reproof, nor heard the voice of them that taught me, and have not inclined my ear to masters?" And what is the consequence? "I have almost been in all evil," says he, "in the midst of the church, and of the congregation." And St. Paul names not this sin, but as intermixed with many other crimes; and he names it twice in his epistle to the Romans, c. i. 30, and in his second epistle to Timothy, c. iii. 2.

Besides, what commandments are children likely to keep, if they keep not this, for which they have not only the motion of grace, equally inducing to the observance of them all, but also a natural inclination to love, honor, and obey those, of whose very substance they are made, from whom they have received their very being, and from whom they have their present subsistence, and future hopes; whom they see careful and tender of them, their great concern being for their daily provisions, and future preferment. Now, if children can break through all these bonds, what ties can keep them to their duty? If they will not hearken to their parents' admonitions, which they cannot suspect but to be for their good, whom will they hear, whose council will they take, to lead and direct them in the paths of virtue? Alas! if their parents' prayers, tears, and corrections, will not work upon

them, what is there left that is likely to prevail? What other means can be thought on more powerful than these? As undutiful children therefore must needs be filled with wickedness, so their lives will not only be short, but also sinful. And were this all, it were not a little to be apprehended by all who have any real concern for their souls; but there is also an additional threat, which completes their punishment, "They shall die in their sins." To live in sin, dear Christians, is a dangerous state; but to die in sin, as it is without redress, it is the extremity of all misery. Those who live in sin, are not out of hopes of repenting and dying in grace; but those who die in sin shut the gates of mercy, and doom themselves to endless woes without recovery.

I might prove this terrible truth, from the natural consequences of a bad death, from a bad life; for if we consider the nature of the thing, we find, we usually die as we live; and if we regard the justice of God, he commonly punishes a sinful life with a bad death, as St. Paul assures us: (Ep. ad Gal. vi. 8.) "What a man sows, that he shall reap; for he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption, but he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting." Therefore, as the lives of disobedient children are always sinful, we have reason to fear they will die in their sins.

But besides this, we have but too clear a testimony from God's words, particularly in regard of undutiful children, in the 20th of Proverbs, "His life shall be taken away, or extinguished in the midst of his sins." This is quite contrary to the promise made to the stout and virtuous woman, in the last chapter of the same book, where she is assured that she shall not die in sin, (Prov. xxxi. 18.) "Her lamp shall not be put out in the night."

If the great reward God promises you, be not a motive powerful enough to make you respectful and obedient to your parents, sure this terrible judgment you are threatened will be enough to frighten you into your duty. If you desire then a long and

happy life, and have any sense of the blessing of a good death, honor your parents. If you have any apprehension of a bad death, avoid disobedience, and all injuries to parents, either in words or actions. Remember you have a common father above in heaven, who is jealous of their honor, as well as his own; he will take their part, and revenge their injuries on your head, both here and hereafter.

We have but too clear an example of this in the person of Absalom, who, rebelling against his father David, was punished by Almighty God with a short and sinful life, and a bad death; he was cut off in the flower of his youth, in the best of his days, and height of his sins. He was a prince endowed with all the perfections of nature; he was easy and affable, and, as the scripture particularly relates, extremely beautiful; he was tenderly beloved by his father, and almost adored by the people; and might have been a happy prince, had his duty been equal to his qualifications. But his disobedience wrought his ruin; he was killed on the day of battle, and killed in his sins, pierced with three lances, and so made a miserable end, leaving a terrible example of God's justice to disobedient children to future ages.

I omit many other examples in holy scripture; but I will relate one very remarkable out of St. Augustin: "At Cæsarea, a town in Cappadocia, there were ten children, seven boys and three girls, of an honorable family, who, all upon their mother's curse, (she being grievously injured by them,) were visibly punished by Almighty God; so that, in a most frightful manner, they all fell shaking in every part of their bodies.

"The occasion was this: the eldest of the children abused his mother, not by injurious words only, but also beat her: the rest of the children stood by unconcerned at the injury, and said not one word to their brother in her behalf. The woman, impatient of the injury, and overwhelmed with grief, ran to the church to curse her eldest son; the devil, laying hold of this violent passion, persuaded her to curse them all, to which she then easily

consented. So, taking hold of the font, with her hair flying loose, and her breasts bare, she prayed to God that all her children might become vagabonds, be banished from their home, and wandering about strange countries, and be a terror to mankind. Upon this, the eldest, being the chief in wickedness, was immediately siezed with such a trembling in every part, that he frightened all that saw him. The same punishment seized all the rest within the space of one year, one after another, in order as they were in age. The mother, seeing that her wicked prayer had so sad an effect, was not able to support the remorse of her conscience, and the reproach of her neighbors, went and hanged herself, finishing a miserable life with a far more miserable death. The children likewise, who, till then, had lived in good repute, were so filled with shame and confusion at their mother's misfortune, that they could not bear the sight of their friends and acquaintances, but left their country, and, turning vagabonds, wandered over the greatest part of the Roman empire. After some time, the eldest was cured at Ravenna, a town on the coast of the Adriatic sea, through the intercession of St. Laurence The sixth, called Paul, with his sister Palladia, came to Hippo, fifteen days before Easter, being admonished so to do by St Augustin; and there, at the tomb of St. Stephen, they begg... of Almighty God, with many prayers and tears, that he would be pleased, through the intercession of the saint, to free them from their trembling; and Paul was cured, though his sister was not. And he gave this account of the whole matter to St. Augustin, upon Easter Tuesday, in the year 425; and it was read, by the order of St. Augustin, to all the people in his church at Hippo: and he himself made a sermon upon it, which is now extant in his works, (Number 32,) wherein he gives this advice.

"It is to be hoped, (says he,) through the mercy of God, that the other brothers and sisters, (who were all, upon their mother's curse, struck by the anger of God, for abusing of her,) may re

gain their health and cure, as this young man has done, for whose recovery we now rejoice. Nevertheless, let children learn henceforward to be obedient and respectful to their parents. And let parents tremble to be thus angry. It is written in the word of God, (Eccl. iii.) That the blessing of the father establishes the family of the sons; but the mother's curse roots up the foundations. Now these wanderers, (says he,) have no foundation in their country; they are a sight to the world, and expose their punishment wherever they come; they are a misery to themselves, and a check to the pride of others. Learn, therefore, children, what the scripture teaches you, to give due honor to your parents. And you, parents, when you are offended, do not forget that you are parents. The mother prayed against her children, and she was heard, because God is truly just; because she had truly received a great injury. The abuse which one of them offered, was not in words only, but in actions; and the rest could tamely behold their mother injured, without saying one word to their brother. God is just, who heard her prayer, and heard her in her grief. But what became of her, miserable wretch? Ah! the sooner she was heard, the more severely she was punished. Parents, learn to ask that of God, which you may not be afraid to receive; learn to make such requests, which you may not tremble to have granted."

From this undeniable fact, you see, dear Christians, the punishment of those who are disobedient and injurious to their parents. How sensible God is of their wrong, and what remarkable examples he makes of them who do it, that thereby children may take warning.

And let parents behold the sad effects of cursing, and wishing evil to their children in their wrath, when any ways provoked or injured by them, which may be, is but too frequent. And God, I fear, often hears their evil prayers, and, upon this account, sends many misfortunes, both to the parents and children, of which, like this miserable woman, they may repent when too late.

And let children observe what they have here been told, and lay up this lesson in their hearts, and let nothing appear in their behavior that is amiss; and, by so doing, they will avoid the threats, and gain the promises of their heavenly Father.

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.—Exod. xx. 13.

THIS precept, which commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves, doubtless obliges us to do him no injury. Now, as murdering him is the greatest of injuries we can do him, it is fitly forbid in the first place, *Thou shalt not kill.*

In this commandment, as well as in the rest, we must consider the positive, as well as the negative part; what is commanded, as well as what is forbid. It is not only murder that is forbid by this commandment, but also whatever tends to it; as quarrelling, fighting, wounding, beating, or severe correcting of servants or children; unjust imprisonment, or any other like injuries done our neighbor, without the warrant of public and lawful authority. Also all unjust anger, desire of revenge, envy, hatred, slander, detraction, or reproachful words, &c.

We are commanded by it to love our neighbor as ourselves; to defend our own and our innocent neighbor's life, when we can without danger of our own. We must be meek and affable to him, as our Saviour teaches, "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (Matt. xi. 29.) When we have fallen out, we must endeavor a reconciliation, as Christ has taught us. "If, therefore, thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift." (Matt

v. 23, 24.) We must endeavor to keep peace with all as much as in us lies: "Happy are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the sons of God." We must relieve him in his necessities, and assist him in his wants, as our Saviour says, "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away." (Matt. v. 42.) Not to feed a lazy or extravagant humor, but to assist them in real necessity. Lastly, we must do good for evil, and love even our enemies; and also pray for those who persecute and slander us. "I say unto you," says Christ in the same place, "love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven." Matt. v. 44.

Murder is so grievous a sin, that of all the crimes man can commit, there is none which carries a greater remorse and horror with it. Cain, who was the first that had the guilt of human blood upon him, was sensible of it. First, he endeavors to conceal it, and scurrilously answers Almighty God, who asked him where his brother Abel was? "that he knew not; am I my brother's keeper?" says he. (Gen. iv. 9, &c.) But, being charged home, and assured by him who sees all things, that his blood cried to heaven for vengeance; then his guilt flew in his face, and raised so great an horror in him, that he owns his fault to be above pardon: "My wickedness is too great," says he, "to deserve forgiveness."

He who commits murder, destroys a man equal to himself: but this is not all; he destroys a man created to the image and likeness of God himself, and for whom he made all things in this visible world. He destroys a man, and, it may be, sends him to everlasting miseries, who was made for nothing less than the inheritance of heaven, and endless happiness. What a number of crimes are epitomized in this one wicked fact! A murderer is the bane of human kind; he destroys his own species, of which even the most savage brutes are not guilty; wolves and tigers

kill not one another. A murderer attacks God himself in his image, and fights against him in his likeness; and God is so sensible of it, that he orders life for life, and blood for blood Whosoever shall shed human blood, his blood "shall be shed," says he, "for man was made to the image of God." (Gen. ix. 6.) A murderer does not only destroy the body, but also, by this sudden and unprovided death, hazards the ruin of the soul. To have a true estimate of this grievous crime, we should be able to value the worth of heaven, and to know the weight and measure of the torments of hell.

But I need not go about to aggravate this crime, nature herself having imprinted in the heart of all mankind, so frightful an image of it, that when they have once been guilty of wilful murder they seldom after enjoy themselves. The blood they have wickedly shed, though it cries loud to heaven, it echoes still louder from their own breasts for vengeance. The laws of all nations punish it with death; and those of the church impose many years of penance upon such as fall not into the hands of justice; so great this crime is, and always has been looked upon.

I shall now make an examination of those who are guilty, because the taking away a man's life is not always murder, and then no breach of this commandment. And,

First. Though it be not allowable for a private person to put the wicked to death, yet this power is lodged in the public; and it is not murder, but justice, to punish criminals with death, if they be such as disturb the public peace, and are enemies to the common good, provided it be according to the order and method of just laws, such as are made for the common welfare and safety of mankind, and not contrary to the law of God. Thus thieves rebels, and murderers, are justly condemned to die: and St. Paul assures us, (Rom. xiii. 4.) that the prince, or chief magistrate does not carry the sword without cause, for he is God's minister to execute his vengeance on such as do evil. I said, "and not contrary to the laws of God;" because Christians, who suffered

under the laws of heathen emperors, were not justly put to death, but murdered; because such laws are contrary to the ordinance of God, and they were innocent, because christianity could be no sin.

Secondly. It is not murder to kill our enemies in a lawful war, but virtue; provided the soldier acts nothing contrary to the law of arms, and has for his motive his country's good, and not a private pique, or the desire of revenge, which is never lawful. For war is certainly lawful; we find it in the old scripture, not only approved, but often commanded, by Almighty God; and in the new we read, that when the soldiers came to St. John Baptist, to know what they were to do to be saved, he bid them neither to vex nor slander any man, and to be content with their pay. Certainly who bid them be content with their pay, did not forbid them to fight.

Thirdly. Those are not guilty of murder who by mere chance, without any design, happen to kill a man. This is clear in the example set down in Deuteronomy, (chap. 19.) of a man felling timber with his partner, the ax happened to fly off the shaft, and kill his friend: he is not guilty of murder, says the scripture, nor to be tried for his life, unless there can be proved some late quarrel between them. Yet as St. Thomas, (2. 2. q. 64, a 8.) and the catechism of the council of Trent teaches, in two cases a man is guilty of accidental murder: 1st, If a man does a thing that is unlawful, which, without any such intention in him, occasions his neighbor's death he is guilty of it; so whosoever strikes or beats a woman with child, if upon that either she or the child dies, he that struck her is guilty of murder. 2dly, If he does a thing that is lawful, and does not take due diligence to prevent such an accident, he is guilty of the evil that happens. So he that is forced to blow up a house, to put a stop to a raging fire, if he does not give notice beforehand, and take care there be no persons in it, he is guilty of murder if any be killed: so he that digs a deep pit in the road, and does not place something to pre-

vent those who may travel by night from falling into it, is guilty of the misfortune that happens; because that evil cannot be altogether involuntary, which we could and ought, and yet did not prevent.

Fourthly. He is not guilty of murder, who kills another in defence of his own life, provided he exceeds not the bounds of a just defence; that is, when he does no more than what is necessary for his own safety. Now he exceeds those, who kills a rogue, when, without danger, he can take and secure him; or when he kills him, if he knows that by wounding him he can save his own life; or when he pursues his adversary, who flees from him, and kills him out of revenge; or, in fine, if he kills him when he knows he can save himself by flying from him; but if none of these, or such means, are likely to succeed, he who kills another, designing only the defence of his own life, is not guilty of murder. But now,

All those, who out of passion, anger, envy, or malice, kill their neighbor, are guilty of murder; because it is only the authority of a lawful power can justify the taking away a man's life, but in self preservation only.

Secondly. If it be unlawful to kill a stranger, it is far more criminal to kill one's self; because the nearer the person killed is allied to the murderer, the greater the crime he commits; so it is a greater crime to kill a father than a stranger. Now, as none, is or can be so nearly related to him as himself, there can be no murder so criminal as the murdering one's self. Besides, by this action he evidently ruins both body and soul, and by robbing his body of a temporal, he deprives his soul of an eternal life; and by seeking to avoid short, he runs himself into everlasting evils.

It is true, we have the example of some, and who are now in the calendar of saints, who have leaped into the fire, as St. Appolonia, and was burnt; who have cast themselves into rivers, and have been drowned, as St. Pelagia, with her mother and

sisters, to avoid the lust of those who would have ravished them; and they are much commended by St. Ambrose. (L. iii. de Virg.) As to this, says St. Augustin, I dare judge nothing rashly; I doubt not but the church went upon good grounds, and was moved by divine authority, thus to honor their memory; and as to them I am persuaded, they were not deceived by human reasoning, but inspired by divine wisdom; and yielded not to error, but obeyed the call of heaven. As we cannot believe otherwise of Sampson, who pulled down the house wherein he was, and crushed himself in the ruins; he, no doubt, by whom the Holy Ghost wrought so many miracles, (Aug. L. i. de. civ. c. 21.) was not moved to this through human zeal, but pushed on by the impulse of the divine spirit. These extraordinary actions of the saints are not to be our ordinary rule. Should God inspires us, as he did them, we might do what they did; but herein we ought to be extremely cautious, that we mistake not a delusion of the devil, for the call of heaven. Certainly it would be very criminal in a father to go about to sacrifice his son, though Abraham designed it, and was commanded by God so to do. It is therefore criminal to kill one's self, or others in defence of their chastity; for this, at the best, is to avoid another person's sin, to fall into a greater of their own; or for fear of falling into wickedness to run certainly into it. Sin is an act of our own choice, so we can never be forced, though we may be greatly tempted to it.

Thirdly. Those are guilty of murder who by extravagant drinking, lewdness, or any other vice kill themselves. "Wine has destroyed very many," says Ecclesiasticus; (chap. xxxi. 30.) and, indeed, the difference is not great whether it be the sword, the rope, drunkenness, or any other vice, that proves the executioner; death comes as sure, though it may be sometimes slower; and at the great tribunal of God, those will stand arraigned for murder, who, by vice, and running towards hell, have shortened their days, that were given them only to work out their salvation and purchase heaven. And the scripture often hints at this.

"In many meats," says Ecclesiasticus, "there will be sickness and greediness will turn to choler; but he that is temperate, shall prolong life." (Chap. xxxvii. 33, 34.) "A merry heart," says the wise man, "makes the life cheerful; and a sorrowful spirit drieth up the bones." (Prov. xvii. 22.) Again: "envy and anger diminish the days, and melancholy thoughts bring old age before its time." (Eccles. xxx. 26.) "A sound heart," says Solomon, "is the life of the flesh, but envy is the rottenness of the bones." (Prov. xiv. 30.) Sorrow has killed many, (says he,) and there is no profit in it.

Fourthly. They cannot be excused from all sin, who kill themselves by immoderate study, labor, fasting, watching, or the like. Because we are obliged to love our neighbor as ourselves; what, therefore, we cannot justly impose upon him, we cannot reasonably choose ourselves. Besides, life and death are not at our disposal; we had not our being from ourselves, but from God, and for God, and to be employed in his service. If, then, through an indiscreet zeal, by an excess of labor, watching, or fasting, and the like, we render ourselves incapable of our ordinary duties, such as his providence has imposed on us, we cannot be excused from a fault. No doubt, as sinners, we are all strictly obliged to mortification and penance, and then particularly, when we find the passions of the body to endanger the life of the soul. When we find within ourselves rebels, that ought to obey reason, to rise against their sovereign, it is then our duty to make head against them and utterly destroy them; yet we ought to have so much caution, as not to destroy the whole city whilst we persecute a rebel; we ought to destroy the vices of the body, and not the body; and so to order and temper our mortifications, that virtue may be nourished whilst vice starves. For as it often happens, that by the same nourishment that virtue is fed and improves, vice increases and grows insolent: so sometimes by a long and indiscreet mortification, whereby the passions are entirely subdued, virtue also languishes. We ought therefore so

to balance our corporal austerities, that piety may thereby be strengthened, and vice never be able to domineer. But I think, I might have spared this caution, for I am persuaded few will kill themselves by any excess in mortification.

Fifthly. Though it may be lawful to kill a robber, in defence of our goods, when they are of great value, and necessary for our own subsistence, or provisions for our family, and when we can by no other means preserve or regain them; yet, I think, it is a great indiscretion to hazard our lives to preserve our goods, and to venture all for a part. However, it is certainly unlawful to kill a thief for the saving of goods that are of small account; this is clearly proved by the censure of the contrary doctrine, by Pope Innocent II. which was this, "regularly speaking it is lawful to kill a thief, to save five shillings." (2 May, 1679.) Since this is condemned, where can we fix, who can set a price on a man's life? If a prudent person can, I think, he would set a small value on his own to venture it for a small matter.

Sixthly. It is criminal to kill a person in defence of our honor, or to avoid his slander. Worldly honor we ought doubtless to contemn: how can it then be lawful to kill a person, in defence of what we ought to neglect? Besides, Christ orders us to pray for such as persecute (Matt. v. 44.) and slander us; that thereby we may shew ourselves to be the children of our Father who is in heaven. What pretence then can we have to kill them, upon the same account, for which Christ bids us to pray for them? Besides, taking away their lives will not recover our onor, but increase our infamy.

Seventhly. It is highly criminal to fight and kill a man in a duel. This wickedness, says St. Augustin, (L. v. Com. c. 14.) is so injurious to our faith (if there be in the heart a greater desire of glory, than either of the fear, or of the love of God) that our Saviour says, "How can you believe, who receive glory one from another, and the glory which is from God alone you do not seek?" (John v. 44.) This way of murdering in cold blood,

is so extremely criminal, that the council of Trent, (Sess. 25. c. 29.) not only excommunicates those who fight, but also all their seconds, adherents, assistants, spectators, and abettors: and forbids Christian burial to such as die in a duel; and earnestly wishes, that that detestable practice of duelling, introduced by the devil's means, to damn souls, by the slaughter of bodies, may for ever be extirpated from the Christian world.

Eighthly. Those women are guilty of murder, who take any medicines, or use any means to make themselves miscarry: as also those who encourage, advise, or knowingly assist them in it, these are often guilty of more crimes than one. For they do not only destroy their child, and murder it body and soul, but also many times occasion their own death, and murder themselves. In like manner, those physicians are guilty of this crime, who give medicines to cause abortion, though it be the only means to save the mother's life. And upon the same account, those midwives are equally criminal who kill the child to save the mother, or the mother to save the child. When circumstances are so hard, that either the child or the mother is in imminent danger to be lost, it is never lawful to kill the one to save the other. They must use their best endeavors to save both; but if this cannot be done, it is better to save neither, than to kill one. This is expressly the canon law, and taken out of St. Ambrose: "If one cannot be assisted," says he, "but by destroying the other, it is better to assist neither, than to destroy the one."

In like manner, those women are guilty of murder, who use not due caution to prevent a miscarriage, but through an excess of dancing, labor, lewdness, or the like, occasion it; for though the action we do, in itself be lawful, yet, as St. Thomas teaches, if it occasions murder, by our not using due caution to prevent it, when we know the danger, we are guilty of it. Therefore childbearing women are under great obligations to do nothing they know, or have just reason to fear, may cause a miscarriage and also to abstain from what they know to be dangerous.

Who does not detest, says Pope Sixtus V. so execrable a wickedness, whereby not only mortal bodies are destroyed, but immortal souls eternally perish? Who will not condemn their impiety of the greatest punishments, who destroy for time and eternity a creature honored with the image of God, and for whose salvation Jesus Christ spilt his blood, and laid down his precious life, under the greatest torments? Who exclude a soul capable of eternal happiness, and designed to be the companion of angels, from the infinitely desirable vision of God? Who rob the divine majesty of all the honor he might have received from this creature; and prevent the filling up those mansions left void by the pride of the fallen angels? Those women who will but consider the least of these circumstances, must needs have a horror of this sin, and acknowledge themselves under very great obligations to take care to avoid the occasions of miscarriages.

Ninthly. Those mothers, or nurses, are guilty of murder, who by laying the children in the same bed with them, by accident overlay them. For when we know a danger, and do not use due care to prevent it, when we can, and ought, we are certainly guilty of all the evil that happens. The great number of children who are thus murdered, are more than sufficient to shew the danger, and to alarm all mothers, and make them take effectual care to prevent it. Mothers, then, when their child is young, ought never to lay it in the bed with them, but in some convenient place by them, where they may be ready to assist it without danger of oppressing it. And this is the express order of the Roman Ritual.

Tenthly. Those are guilty of murder, who relieve not those who are in extreme necessity. Whosoever thou art, says St. Ambrose, that can save a man by relieving of him, if thou hast not relieved him, thou hast killed him. It is related in the life of St. Gregory the Great, (Jo. Diac. 1. ii. c. 29.) that a poor man being found dead in some strait passage of the galleries, St. Gregory imagining he died for want of relief, abstained from

saying Mass several days, and was as much troubled, as if he had killed him with his own hand, which would be wickedness to imagine.

Lastly. A judge is guilty of murder, who condemns to death him whom he knows to be innocent, or is not proved guilty. And the same crime is to be laid to their charge, who, by false oaths, swear a man out of his life.

The same is to be said of physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries, when their patients are lost by their great neglect, or gross ignorance; or by using a desperate medicine, without necessity, only to try the experiment. And those midwives are to be placed in the same rank, who, boldly undertake the employment, and understand very little of their business; the death of those women and children who are lost by their gross ignorance, or great carelessness, is to be laid at their door. In all these persons there ought to be great honesty, care and knowledge, because the lives of many men and women are in their hands, and depend upon it.

Here, dear Christians, you see the grievousness of the sin of murder, and how many persons are, or may be guilty of it. Let us then take care of so crying a sin; and let us not neglect to defend our neighbor's life, when it is in our power, and we can do it without the hazard of our own. Thus we shall please the author of life, and deserve from him an eternal reward.

DISCOURSE II.

ON THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.—Exod. xx. 13.

THERE are three sorts of murder, and therefore three ways of murdering. There is the murdering of a man's body, the murdering of a man's soul, and the murdering of a man in his repu-

tation. The first separates soul and body, and takes away our natural life, for the body lives by the soul. The second deprives our soul of grace, and takes away our spiritual life, for the soul lives by the grace of God. The third takes away our good name, and robs us of our civil life, for a man lives by his reputation. The first is, properly termed, murder; the second, scandal; the third, detraction; and all very injurious to us. The first is explained in the foregoing discourse; and the second, viz., scandal, shall be in this.

What we call scandal is, a word or action said or done amiss, and proves the occasion of our neighbor's falling into sin. So, not only those, who, by their command, council, persuasion, intreaty, presents, or promises, or the like, move others to do what they cannot do without sin, are guilty of scandal, but also those, who, by their ill example, teach or encourage others in wickedness, are guilty of this crime. And this is always a mortal sin, when the fault we occasion is mortal; and venial, when the fault is venial. But that I may thoroughly and clearly explain, and you, dear Christians, comprehend this matter, which few understand, and fewer regard; you must know there are four ways whereby we may be the occasion of scandal.

First. All those are guilty of the sin of scandal, who draw, or endeavor to draw, another into any manner of wickedness, by persuasion, promises, threats, command, or the like; or when they teach them any sin, or what is most terrible, when they persuade them to conceal it in confession. When they ridicule devotion, and laugh and jeer at those who are more pious, and frequent the sacraments oftener than themselves: these are they who sit in the chair of pestilence, or infection, as the scripture expresses it, (Psalm i. 1.) and are the devil's best friends. When they instil principles of disobedience, or contempt of parents or superiors: when they teach or encourage them to cheat or steal; when they promote the evil maxims of the world, contrary to those of the gospel, and go about to make the pardon of an injury, or the

putting up an affront, to look mean, and heighten the bravery of fighting and revenge; how often do they cry, Were I as you, I would not take this or that from them; I would tell them their own; were I as you, I would not put it up so; I would certainly be revenged, and the like. Thus they kindle, or at least blow up a dying passion. Were I as you, I would not be confined by my mother, or my dame, to stay at home, but would go abroad and take my pleasure in such meetings, or company, as other young women do, with a thousand of such incitements to evil in all kinds; when they invite and gather together company for a merry bout, which they know, or have reason to fear, will be a drunken meeting; when they press, or promote drinking to excess; when they promote junketing at others' cost, and engage one another to steal each something from their masters or mistresses, to make up the treat. Here all are the cause of one another's sin, and each guilty of the whole theft. When they lend about evil books, and teach one another filthy songs, where nature is but too prone to want an helping hand; when they promote gaming, wherein they know there will be cheating, cursing, swearing, quarrelling, and the like; when they take pleasure in vexing others, and making them swear and curse; sure that must be a cruel pleasure, to take delight to hear others damn themselves. But I should make no end, should I reckon up but the hundredth part of the ways persons have to draw others into sin. No doubt, all such advice in servants, or others, that is contrary to good order, or government, or the careful and faithful discharge of their respective duties, and employments, is scandalous; or whatever council is given contrary to the law of God, or the church, or promotes and countenances vice, or lessens and discourages virtue in any kind. Now, all these, who by any way whatever draw others into sin, are guilty of scandal; they are doubtless great enemies to Christ, and the devil's confederates, and generally manage his interest with more success than he can do himself.

Secondly. Those are guilty of scandal, who, though they do not intend to draw another into what is sin, yet say or do such things in public, as of their own nature draw others into sin St. Thomas, ii. 2 q. 43. a. 1. ad 4 um. So those are guilty of this crime, who do any unseemly action, or talk immodestly before company, especially young people; they teach wickedness to some embolden others to do the like, and endanger the virtue of all, who are apt to be pleased with what they hear. The enemy of our souls receives no greater assistance than from these volunteers, to persecute Jesus Christ, to hinder the peopling of heaven, and to crowd his own dominions. How many are there of these in the world, both in private and public! In public meetings, in ale-houses, at women's labors, in time of harvest, this feast of the devil is almost their only entertainment. How many in the world might have preserved their virtue to this day, had they not drunk in this poison in their youth? How many men and women, boys and girls, are now burning in the flames of hell, who might have been saints in heaven, had they not been seduced by evil discourse and bad example? "Deceive not yourselves, (says the great apostle in his epistle to the Christians of 1 Corinth. c. xv. 33.) evil communications corrupt good manners." And our Saviour pronounces many a wo to such as were the occasion of their sins: "Wo to the world, because of scandals, (says he,) for it must needs be that scandals come; but nevertheless, wo to that man by whom the scandal cometh." Matt. xviii. 7.

St. Antonius (part ii. t. 7. c. 4.) reckons backbiting, slandering, contentions, and such like, amongst the sins that give scandal; for though these sins are particularly injurious to the absent, yet they are no small damage to the hearers, who are but too often involved in the same crime; for he who gives a willing ear is almost as bad as the detractor; and we may add to these, blasphemy, cursing, and frequent swearing; for as these are looked on more modish, and to carry something of greatness in them, they are more scandalous, because more apt to draw others into

the same practice. It would be without end to run over all the different ways of giving scandal: for few sin alone; though their inclinations are bent to evil, they care not to be particular in wickedness: the more they can draw into their evil ways, the less shame they have to continue in them: how many does an idle, drunken, and debauched fellow draw into wickedness? For it is but small satisfaction to be drunk alone. In fine, how many sins are occasioned by a loose behavior, vain and curious dressing, especially when above the usual mode, and exceeding the circumstances of their rank and condition?

Thirdly. Besides these two sorts of scandal, which are properly called so, there is a third sort, which is usually called the scandal of the weak. It is occasioned both without any design in him that gives it to draw another into evil, but only has the appearance of evil; so whosoever hereby receives any damage, it is out of ignorance, or want of instruction.

Thus, when some ill-instructed person sees another he knows wiser than himself, to eat flesh upon a fasting day, or to work upon a holiday, or the like, is immediately scandalized, not considering the reasons the person may have for so doing; and immediately forms this judgment to himself: If they do it, why may not I? and so breaks a precept of the church. St. Paul speaks of this sort of scandal, upon the occasion of some Christian eating flesh that had been sacrificed to idols, and in the temple of the idol. The sense is this: you are wise enough to know there is no harm in eating flesh sacrificed to idols, because you know there is no virtue in the idol, to make it either better or worse; (1 Cor. viii.) but a weak brother sees you, and thereupon imagining some virtue or sanctification in those meats, from the idol to which they were offered, and so eats them with the same devotion as he used to do before his conversion. And thus, says St. Paul, you, by your knowledge, ruin your brother, for whom Christ died. Then he adds, if what I eat scandalized my brother, I will sooner choose never more to eat flesh. This resolution is much different,

dear Christians, from what some take, who, seeing or knowing their brother scandalized at what they do, are apt to cry, I care not. I do nothing but what is lawful, let them look to it. St. Paul was of a sweeter and more Christian temper; his charity out-weighed his own convenience, and he was willing to deprive himself for ever of what in itself was lawful, rather than occasion a sin in one whom Christ has died to save. And indeed he who has not some consideration for the salvation of his brother, has a small sense of what Christ has done and suffered for him. When we are in these circumstances, it is our duty, and a great act of charity, either to omit for that time what may scandalize unless some necessity, or great good, press for the doing of it, or to give the reason why we do it, and so remove the occasion of scandal. The contrary method cannot be without some fault, more or less, in proportion to the danger of our neighbor's falling, and the greatness of the sin whereinto he is likely to fall.

A fourth sort of scandal is, that which is merely taken, and no ways given: it is called the scandal of the Pharisees, and takes its rise only from their own malice, who are scandalized. Thus some fall into the sin of envy, to see others pious and devout. This scandal is by no means to be avoided; for devotion is not to be omitted, to prevent another's malicious envy. Again, others are sometimes scandalized to hear truth, and revile the preacher for it, when it grates on those passions they will not endure to have touched. Thus they will neither hear instructions willingly themselves, nor suffer others to hear them, in a matter where their interest and inclination lead another way. And thus the Pharisees were scandalized at our Saviour's doctrine; "Dost thou know, (says his disciples to him, Matt. xv. 12.) that the Pharisees, when they heard this word were scandalized? Let them alone, says our Saviour, they are blind, and the leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit." This sort of scandal therefore we are not to regard.

You must now observe, dear Christians, that there are three

reasons that enhance the malice of the sin of scandal, and make the author extremely odious to God. The first is, the particular injury he does to our Saviour Christ. The second, the great injury he does to his neighbor. The third is, the injury he does himself who gives scandal.

First then, he that draws another into sin is remarkably injurious to Christ, because he endeavors to ruin that soul, for whose salvation Christ spared neither labor, nor pains, nor even life itself. What should we say of a subject, who had been raised, and particularly favored by his prince; yet, notwithstanding his duty, on the one side, and many obligations on the other, for some petty design breaks through all, casts off his allegiance, cabals, and sides with his enemies, endeavors to countermine and oppose all his just designs, and uses all means to debauch his faithful subjects, and draw them from him? This crime is black enough, and yet but a faint image of their wickedness, and draw into sin, not only the subjects, but the children of God, and not only the friends of Christ, but the price of his blood. The most remarkable instance and dearest pledge of God's love to man, (and for which we have reason to bless and praise him all the days of our life,) is his coming down from heaven, his leading a poor and painful life for many years, and his dying on the cross to save our souls from everlasting miseries. Had not his own goodness moved him to do this for us, we might have bid adieu to all comfort, we should have been for ever lost. Hell, how terrible soever it is, would have been our just due, and we, with the sinful angels, should have had no other but that sad abode. But his goodness, dear Christians, and his love to man, drew him to undertake our cause, and to prevent, if we would, our falling into this place of unspeakable torments and horror; but it cost him dear, even his life, under the greatest pains and sorrow. And, besides this great delivery, he was pleased to open us the gates, and put us into the way of heaven, where infinite joys

shall bless and crown all those who in earnest endeavor to gain them.

Now, those who draw, or go about to draw others into sin, or say such things, or do such actions, that, of their own nature, move others to evil, set themselves against Christ, oppose all these his charitable designs, and make his labor, his pains, and even his death, void. What an injury is this to the Son of God, and what a trouble must it be to see those souls lost by your scandals, that have cost him so dear.

How will this appear, sinful soul, at the hour of thy death? With what face wilt thou look upon thy Saviour and Judge, who, by thy evil discourse, or bad example, thy persuasions, or enticements, has ruined those who stood him in many a painful day, and many a bitter torment to save? So God loved the world as to give his only Son for the world; and you, sinful soul, have endeavored to traduce all whom his divine discourses, and holy conversation endeavored to draw to virtue, your evil discourse, and bad example have drawn into vice; whom his sufferings redeemed, your wickedness has damned; and those for whom he opened the gates of heaven, your scandals have shut within the gates of hell. Consider now, if you can, how your crime will be resented then by your judge, whom you have thus opposed and injured, and in what touches him so nearly. Ah! for you to do this; you, who have received so many favors from him; you, who owe your redemption to his goodness; you, who owe your preservation from hell, every day and every hour of those many years you have spent in sin, and were not surprised by sudden death. For you to play the devil's part, and to persecute Christ, in ruining those he desired to save; certainly there will not, there cannot be a heavier charge brought against you at your death than this is.

There is no great wonder the devil tempts men and women, and endeavors to draw them into sin; for though he gets no advantage by it, yet he satisfies an envious nature, and seems to be

revenged on God; but alas! for him, his lot is unchangeable, he has nothing more to fear, nor anything to hope, nor has he been obliged so highly as man has been.

He has nothing to fear—hell is already his doom—his state is fixed, and he knows he can never be released. Nor has he anything to hope; he has already lost heaven, and that past recovery; no beam of comfort shall ever cheer his heart, nor glimpse of joy ever enter his sad dominions. Nor is this ingratitude comparable to that of men. God never sent down his only Son from heaven to seek him, he never laid his shoulders to the cross for his sake, nor did he ever redeem him. If the devils then are wicked in endeavoring to draw us into sin, men, over and above this wickedness, are extremely ungrateful to their Redeemer, whilst, by their scandalous behavior, they ravish from their God, and the most obliging and best of friends, those who are as dear to him as his own life, which he gave for them. Besides this unworthy return, what a madness are they guilty of in thus provoking God, whilst they have all to hope, and all to fear; who have the promise of heaven only upon their good behavior, and the assurance of hell on their evil; who cannot expect to share with Christ in his glory, but by joining with him in his charity, in endeavoring to save whom he has redeemed; who cannot but expect to be punished with the devils, who do the work of the devils, and to answer for as many souls as they have ruined by their scandals, by their wicked behavior, and evil counsel.

If the Son of God resents the devil's malice in tempting us to sin, how must he resent this wickedness in ungrateful men? who, as they were the occasion of his sufferings, are the marks of his love; with what reason may he repeat what holy David said in his name, (Psalm liv.) The prosecution of my enemy I could have borne with patience; but for you to persecute me, whom I have loved when you deserved it not, whom I placed in the way to heaven, when I might have let you run headlong into everlasting misery, whom I drew from the jaws of death, to give

you life everlasting: and whom, from the slaves of the devil, I designed companions of the glorious angels, and to share an eternity of happiness with me: and for you to persecute me, to draw my friends from me, to teach them wickedness, and promote their ruin. Ah! dear Christians, what a resentment is this of the Son of God? And yet how reasonable those cannot but own in their hearts, who have been the ruin though but of one soul.

There was a time when he suffered persecution, even unto death, and he suffered it willingly, when it was for our good, for our redemption! but this persecution, that strikes at him through the ruin of his friends, who are the price of his blood, and as he expresses himself by the prophet Zachary, (ii. 8.) as dear to him as the apple of his eye; how can this be borne? What a resentment, and what a judgment they who are guilty of this crime, will find another day from the Son of God!

Scandal, as I said before, is a sort of murder, and certainly the worst of murders, because it murders the soul, and deprives it of its spiritual and eternal life. No sooner is sin committed, but death enters, and grace departs; and the remains are only the carcase of a soul robbed of all its beauty; and however it appears to men, it is hateful to the eyes of God. As far then as the soul is nobler and more valuable than the body, and as far as eternity exceeds short time, so far this murder is certainly more criminal than any other. If you take away your neighbor's reputation, the damage no doubt is very great, and hard to be repaired; but it is only temporal, and such as, by good management, he may improve to his spiritual advantage; patience will make it a step towards heaven. If you take away his life, the injury is truly great, but yet of itself it robs him only of the blessings of this world. It is true, if he be killed in mortal sin, let us not consider the loss, for it is above thought or imagination, his soul is ruined by the death of the body; but if he then be in a good state, such as good Christians ought always to be in, it then only puts an end to the miseries of this life, and places him in the way to a better.

But if you draw him into sin, you take away his spiritual life, you rob him of divine grace, which is not only the beauty, but the very life of the soul, and plunder him of all that he has truly valuable; you draw him into a wretched snare, and persuade him to exchange his title to heaven for the purchase of hell: to banish the Holy Ghost, who reigned in his heart, to give the possession to the devil, and let him domineer; to renounce the title of the child of God, with his fatherly protection, and all the blessings that attend it, to become a slave of the devil, under all the miseries that follow it; and if he dies in that condition, as most do, the loss is above valuation. I say again, as most do, because our Saviour has said it; (Matt. xx. 16.) for he declares, that out of many who are called, few are chosen; he has said, (Matt. vii. 14.) the way to heaven is hard, and few find it; both which testimonies you will find more than once repeated in the gospel. It is an easy matter to draw others into sin and death, but a difficult task to raise them again to life, and the practice of virtue: the one is done by the weakness of man, but the other requires nothing less than the power of God. I only appeal to your own consciences, how great the difficulty of amendment is, how hard to break off an evil custom, and to change from a life of sin to a life of virtue. If it be not hard, all those who relapse into sin will be found inexcusable in the sight of God. What an injury then, what a great injury do you do another, when you draw him into sin, either by words or deeds, persuasions, or ill example! and what an injury do you do yourself! Which is the third reason that may increase your horror of the sin of scandal. Reflect often, dear Christians, on the grievousness of this sin; and petition heaven daily to grant true repentance to all such, whose sins you have occasioned; and for yourself make this prayer continually, with holy David: "Cleanse me, O Lord, from my secret sins; and from those of others spare thy servant." Psalm xvii. 13. For only thus can you hope to satisfy for what is past, and appease the anger of God.

DISCOURSE III.

ON THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.—Exod. xx. 13.

I HAVE shewn you, dear Christians, in the foregoing discourse that scandal was not only a spiritual murder, but also the worst of murders, because it deprives a soul of God, for whom she was made, and robs God of a soul which he has redeemed. I have also laid down how many ways it may be committed, both by evil discourse and bad example, and how grievous a sin it is, because extremely injurious to Christ, whom it deprives of the labors and pains of his life, and the fruits of his death; very injurious also to your neighbor, because it robs him not of a short but of an everlasting life, and brings not only temporal, but an eternal death: it divests him of the just title he had to the joys of heaven, and leaves him in exchange the torments of hell. I promised likewise to let you see how injurious it is to the person who gives the scandal, which is the subject of this discourse.

Scandal is extremely injurious to him who commits it; that is, he who is the occasion of another's committing sin, is his own greatest enemy; for all the injury done both to Christ and to his neighbor, will be all another day charged upon his own head; and as he has been the unjust occasion of another's ruin, he must bear the weight of all, and answer for the soul, or souls, he has drawn from Christ, and drawn into their own ruin. For the injury he does to Christ, the curse of Christ will fall upon him. For the injury he does to his neighbor, the sins of his neighbor will fall upon him. Both these are but a sad prospect to one whose only and eternal happiness consists in pleasing and serving Christ, that he may reign with Christ; and in loving his neighbor, and promoting his salvation, that he may perpetuate his love, and gain a second crown to himself, in reward of what he gained

for his neighbor: "For they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity," (Dan. xii. 3.) as Almighty God assures us.

But the curse of Christ will fall on those, who, though their fault occasion others to sin, as the scripture expressly teaches: "Wo to the world, (says Christ, Matt. xviii. 7.) because of scandals, for it must needs be that scandals come; but nevertheless, wo to that man by whom the scandal cometh." Luke xvii. 1. How terrible, dear Christians, is this wo from the mouth of the Son of God, who wants no power to execute his will, and revenge the injuries he receives from wicked and ungrateful men! And how reasonable and equitable is this proceeding of Almighty God against them, who, having received their being, preservation, and redemption, from his goodness and bounty, use endeavors to seduce the souls whom he labored to save! To what end did God send his only Son into the world, but to save souls? To what end were all his labors, his miracles, his preaching, and instructions, but to save souls? To what end was his planting the church, his dying on the cross, and sending down the Holy Ghost, but to save souls? In a word, what other aim had heaven in the whole economy of the incarnation, but to save souls? Now, what other aim have those, who draw others into sin, but to oppose God in the greatest work of his mercy and goodness, and ruin those, for whom he spared not the life of his only Son to save? What other end have all the pernicious principles of the world, of living as others live, and doing as others do? Better be out of the world than not to live like the world; not to be singular, but complying and agreeable in company; not to neglect the time that will never return, but to spend their youth in pleasure, and to leave old age for morose virtue and retirement. What other end have these but the ruin of souls? What other end have their profane and filthy discourse, but either to put modesty out of countenance, or to teach and improve evil, and ruin souls? What other end, in fine, has their scandalous behavior, and bad example, in any kind, but to authorize what God

forbids, and to ruin souls? Wonder not then the Son of God cries out, "Wo to the world, because of scandals; and wo to that man by whom scandal cometh." Matt. xviii. 7.

Let us, dear Christians, but give a glance at the many and dear obligations we have to our God, and the light of these will shew clearly the blackness of this crime, and the punishment it deserves; we will not name any temporal blessings, the evils from which we have been preserved, and the goods we have received both of nature and fortune, each far above the proportion of many others. We have received from him a double being, what we are by nature, and what we are by grace; we are made and redeemed by him; for when by the death which sin gave, we ceased to live to God, and lived only to our eternal ruin, his goodness brought him down from heaven to seek and save us. Here he spent his time and pains for our improvement, and stuck not to give even his life for our redemption, that we might once more live to him, and live to ourselves, by adding to the life he retrieved, the only true comfort of living in an eternity of happiness.

Remember here the preference he gave to men before the fallen angels, creatures, though equal in sin, yet nobler in nature, and left for ever to miseries; the thought whereof is enough to make us tremble. And forget not the preference he has given you before thousands of your fellow creatures, whom he has chosen out of many, placed in his church, and furnished with all means of salvation, whilst millions are left in blindness, or infidelity, and suffered still to sit in the shade of death, and only live in endless woes. And what is still more, though you see many others cut off before your eyes, in the midst of their days and sins, yet he has continued his mercies unto you until this moment of your life, notwithstanding your tepidity and carelessness, nay, your wickedness, and even ingratitude for all this kindness.

What showers of blessings are these that descend thus kindly

from heaven, sufficient to make fruitful the most barren, and soften the hardest heart, especially when all these are in order to greater and more lasting blessings, to dignify our nature, to entitle us to his own heaven, and to fit us for himself, that he may share that immense happiness with us, such as we are! Whereas, he always was, is, and will be eternally happy, though we had never been.

When you have seriously thought of this, and compared what you are, your own worthless nothing, to this vast, yet kind profuseness of your God; can you think a grateful acknowledgment too great a return? Or should you employ the understanding, the heart, the goods, and the time you have received from him, to his honor, how small a proportion would this bear with the greatness of God's bounty to you! When in reality, at the bottom, the employing of them in his service is entirely your own greatest interest, God has only the satisfaction thereupon to oblige you the more.

But should there be any found, (as God knows there are but too many,) so far insensible of this goodness, so far from any real acknowledgment, that they return wickedness instead of gratitude; so far from benefitting themselves by their happy circumstances, that through their great negligence, or incorrigible wickedness, they abuse them to their greater damnation. So far from being really taken with the happiness of heaven, Christ has purchased for us, and promised to innocence and virtue, that they choose the present satisfaction of earth, which sin affords, and willingly follow and secure these with the hazard of those. No doubt, they will another day reap the fruit of their choice, when "The Son of Man shall send his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandals, and them that work iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," (as we are assured by St. Matthew, xiii. 41, 42.)

Grant them thus to carve for themselves, and take what they like best; let them have the pleasure of sin, and put heaven to

the venture; let them deprive the Son of God of the satisfaction of saving their souls; let all his pains and sorrows be lost on them. But when they contrive thus for others, when they are not content to make no return themselves to goodness, the mercies and patience of their God, but they will have others to be as insensible and ungrateful as themselves; when they are not content to ruin their own souls, but they must involve others in the same folly or madness; when they are not content to lose themselves the fruit of their redemption, but they must endeavor to lay waste all the mercies of God. When they thus contrive against Christ, and endeavor to disappoint his charity, and to make his death fruitless; what do they deserve, what punishment, think you, will they have from the Saviour of men? Whatever it be, no doubt it is terrible, and included in those woes which he has left behind him to strike with a just apprehension, and to be a continual warning to us; "Wo to the world, because of scandals; it is necessary that scandals come; nevertheless, wo to that man by whom scandal cometh." Matt. xviii. 7. The blessing of God is joy to your hearts, because it comprehends all comfort; but the curse of God must be a terror to our souls, because it includes all misery. Christ is sensible of the great injury he receives, and of all the damage that comes to our neighbor; and therefore, "Wo be to that man by whom scandal cometh; it were better for him, (says our Saviour Christ,) that a mill-stone was hung about his neck, and he cast into the bottom of the sea." "It were better for him," that is to say, this frightful and inevitable death is a milder punishment than what those must expect, who corrupt innocence, or draw others into sin. Yes, certainly, whoever obstructs or prevents the mercy of God from its effects, though but on one soul, will find the weight of his justice upon their own.

It was not often our Saviour pronounced those woes; we find them sometimes against the Scribes and Pharisees, and one against Judas: but the Pharisees were people that set themselves against

Christ, and all his charitable designs, they slighted his person, decried his doctrine, and vilified his miracles, that the people might not regard them, believe, and be saved.

These Pharisees, though they did not, like the scandalous person, aim to draw the people into vice, they endeavored to withdraw them from virtue; though they, it may be, intended not their spiritual death and ruin, yet they designed to hinder them from hearing the word of life, whereby they might be saved, which, when considered, is equally prejudicial. Upon this malignant spirit of theirs, our Saviour cries to them, "Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in; and those that are going in you suffer not to enter." Matt. xxiii. 13. And again in the fifteenth verse of the same chapter, "Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you go round about the sea and the land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him the child of hell two-fold more than yourselves." And this is but too often the wretched success scandalous persons have; they go about to corrupt the innocent, and to draw them into their evil ways; and in a little time, they outdo their teachers, and grow more infamous and expert in wickedness than their leaders, and become children of hell, twice as bad as they themselves: and therefore, it is with just reason that Christ says, "Wo be to that man by whom scandal cometh."

Judas, you know, was that apostate villain who betrayed his Lord and master, and delivered up the Son of God to his enemies: our Saviour says of him, "Wo to that man, by whom I shall be betrayed, it were better for him if he had never been born." (Matt. xxvi. 24.) And this we may say, with good reason, of those who employ their lives in sin, and causing others to sin; it were better for them they had never had life, than thus abusing it to their own and others ruin; the time will come, when they shall know their doom, and know it to their cost; all that is included in those terrible woes, Christ has left in the gospel for

our caution. If the injury, dear Christians, done to Christ, draws all this upon him, who occasions another's sin, the damage our neighbor receives will not be forgotten; for as he is truly guilty, so he shall be punished for all the sins others shall commit, through his fault.

It is a received doctrine among divines, that the accidental glory of the blessed in heaven shall increase every day, till the end of the world, as the seed of virtue they have left behind them multiplies and increases to the honor of God and the advantage of souls. So that as many as are preserved in innocence, or drawn out of vice to the practice of virtue, by the good example they have left, the instructions they have given, or the good books they have wrote, whereby sinners are daily converted, the just edified, and both improved in knowledge and piety, they shall daily receive an addition to their crown of glory, in proportion to the good they shall daily occasion by their labors. So the torments of the wicked shall be increased upon them, even till the day of judgment, in proportion to the sins that shall be committed through their bad example, or evil discourse; by the lewd songs they have composed, dispersed, or taught others; by the pernicious books they have wrote, or lent about, destructive to faith or good manners; in fine, by all the evil principles and seeds of vice, which they have left, and which may grow up into wickedness in thousands, both in their own time and future ages; they shall receive, I say, an addition of torments to their damnation, for each sin that through their fault shall be committed, even to the end of the world. And this is one reason why there will be a general judgment besides that which passes at the moment after death. For as there are many virtuous actions, as the writings of the Fathers, &c., which will not, nor cannot have their full effect till the end of the world: so there are many evil actions, many pernicious and damnable principles, that will not be rooted out as long as there are men to be corrupted. The day of judgment will clear all; it will shew the virtuous cause from

whence proceeded so many good effects in the salvation of thousands, with the additional glory for each of these. It will also lay open the evil cause, with all its sad effects, in the damnation of millions; and though these have each their respective punishment, yet the ruin of their souls will be charged upon the authors of their crimes, and they in the increase of torments must bear the weight of each sin.

If they who instruct others to justice shall shine like stars in heaven for all eternity, still increasing in lustre from day to day as they light more and more persons to heaven, or increase their virtue: those who teach others wickedness, or draw them into vice, shall burn in the flames of hell for endless ages, still increasing in torments, or receiving a deeper damnation, the more and more souls they ruin, till time shall be at an end. What thanks will those receive who have promoted the salvation of many? And what curses must they expect from those who have too much reason to lay their damnation at their doors? Their bad example, their evil discourse, their promises, their encouragememt, their persuasions, and the like, have been their ruin.

King David repented with so much sincerity for the two sins he committed, that he had an assurance of pardon from the prophet's own mouth; yet for the scandal he gave to strangers, which is expressed by the word blasphemy, he was severely punished; nevertheless, says the prophet, (2 Reg. xii. 14.) Because thou hast made the enemies of the Lord blaspheme, thy child shall die. And in punishment of his crime, his own son rebelled against him, abused his wives, turned him out of his kingdom, and persecuted him to death, and he was hardly restored, with the loss of above twenty thousand lives.

Jeroboam, first king of Israel, did not only sin himself, but caused Israel to sin, and Almighty God never forgot the scandal; for as often as he names the man, it is always with that hateful title, who sinned and made Israel to sin.

Berengarius, who broached an heresy against the real presence,

and thereby led many into error, repented at last, retired out of the world, and underwent severe penance for twelve years; yet when he came to die, trembling he spoke to all present, I hope to find mercy with God for these twelve years' penance that I have done, yet I dread his justice for the scandal I have given the souls I have seduced; and so he died.

After all this, is it not astonishing to see those that know and believe this, so industrious to draw others into sin? To make it their recreation to say or do such things as often ruin, and always endanger souls? To contrive to get others drunk, to inveigle persons into things that are evil, and laugh and rejoice when it is done? These are they of whom Solomon speaks, "whose ways," says he, "are perverse, and their steps infamous; who are glad when they have done evil, and rejoice in most wicked things." (Prov. ii. 14. 15.) But are these Christians? Are they sensible of the grievous injury they do to Christ, the damage they cause to their neighbor's soul, and the vengeance they draw upon their own heads? Was it for this Christ died for them? Is this (worst of persecutions upon him and his) the return they make him, for their dearly purchased redemption? Do they believe death will come, and judgment will follow, where Christ presides, and where they will be charged with the whole weight of the sins, or damnation of others, occasioned by them?

Take warning, sinful souls, from this moment, and continue not, like Jeroboam, in your evil ways, but repent seriously with King David; and though you cannot expect to have the same assurance as he had, of the pardon of your sins, yet if you spend the remaining time of your life in fasts, in prayer, in alms, and retirement, as far as your circumstances will permit, you may say with Berengarius, at the hour of your death, that you hope for mercy at the hands of a good God, upon the account of the long and sharp penance you have done, though you cannot be without fear of the justice of your rightful judge, upon the account of the sins you have occasioned, and the souls you have ruined.

And what I recommend to you above all, is, to let your change of life appear to the world, that you may edify or draw from the ways of sin, by the example of a serious and remarkable piety, as many as you have caused to offend God by your bad discourse, or evil behavior; for nothing can atone better for the ruin of a soul, than the saving a soul. The most divine employment upon earth, says St. Denis, (De Cœl. Hi. c. 3.) is to co-operate with God in the salvation of souls: nothing is more pleasing to God, nor of more concern to him, says St. Chrysostom, (Hom. 2. 40. in Gen.) than the salvation of souls: and it is his will, says the apostle, (1 ad Tim. ii. 4.) that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. Join then with Christ, and be as zealous in saving as you have been forward in ruining souls, and you may hope, after your pious labors, to be placed amongst those, who, for instructing others to justice, shall shine like the stars in heaven for perpetual eternities.

DISCOURSE IV

ON THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.—Exod. xx. 13.

There is, dear Christians, a third sort of murder committed by the tongue, viz., by calumny, detraction, slander, or backbiting. Here the murderer's aim is not to lay violent hands upon his neighbor, and to take away his life, as a mistaken point of honor, or some violent passion may suggest; or to endanger his soul by drawing, or doing anything that may draw him into sin, as scandal too frequently does: but only to murder his reputation, or to lessen him in the esteem of others, which is effected by calumny, detraction, or backbiting.

Man is born with so much pride (which usually grows up with him, and increases with his years) that he hardly bears to be

undervalued, or to see others preferred before him, in that wherein he values himself; and thereupon very often jealousy, anger, a little envy, a pique, a displeasure, or an unreasonable vindication of themselves, which are all rooted in pride, puts those, whose passions are not over-ruled by charity, upon detraction, backbiting, or exposing their neighbor's faults, either directly or indirectly, of which others are ignorant, or seem to overlook: and this either to justify themselves, or to satisfy their anger, gratify an envious temper, or sometimes to raise their own credit from the ruin of others, vainly imagining they gain to themselves as much esteem as they make others lose: as the wild Indian kills a brave man, in hopes to inherit himself all the worth he destroys in another. And what is the consequence? It is sometimes our neighbor's utter ruin, often his great damage, and always his prejudice more or less.

There are some so strangely ignorant, or rather so wilfully blind, that they take nothing to be detraction, but the accusing a person falsely of some notorious crime, as adultery, fornication, or of such a theft, as if known would endanger his life. In anything else they make no scruple to talk freely of their neighbor's failings, especially when they have, or think they have, truth on their side, in all they say.

There are others who fall into the contrary extreme, and are so nice of their neighbor's reputation, and so afraid of charging their own consciences, by doing him an injury, that they will not discover his failings, though it be to save his soul. A restless curiosity often sets them upon prying into their neighbor's actions, and they see and observe many things very blameable, which evidently tend to the ruin of their reputation and souls, or to the great damage of a third person, and they are religiously silent, and stand their friend till they see them ruined as to this world, and may be the next too: whereas a timely and private discovery of their condition to a parent, or some discreet and charitable person, might have prevented their infamy, and retrieved their

souls; a seasonable admonition might have drawn them out of a dangerous company, and from ill-ways, and hindered great injustices that fell on others.

Let us now examine wherein the discovering our neighbor's failings is criminal, and wherein it is not; that is, wherein it is detraction, and absolutely forbid by Almighty God, and wherein it is fraternal correction, and absolutely commanded by our Saviour Christ. The avoiding of the one, and performing the other, are equally Christian duties, founded in charity, and have no other end but our neighbor's good and advantage—to wit, the saving of his reputation and his soul.

Detraction, contumely, slander, backbiting, and calumny, are usually taken for the same crime, though there is great difference. It is contumely to reproach a person to his face with some fault he has committed, or is presumed to have committed; or to cast in his teeth some natural defect. On the contrary, it is detraction to speak ill of him in his absence, and to slander him behind his back, so it is usually called backbiting. It is calumny only when a person is accused falsely, and charged with a crime of which he is really innocent; but it is detraction to discover a fault of which he is really guilty, when it is to his prejudice, if it be private, or known only to few. Now, after all this—

What is detraction? St. Thomas tells us, (2. 2. q. 73. a. 2.) that it is the blackening of another's reputation, or the reporting of a sin of a person capable to defame him, or lessen his esteem with others; and it is committed two ways, as the same saint tells us, directly and indirectly; that is, sometimes it is barefaced and bold, and the detractor has no other intent but openly to be revenged of his neighbor, and to do him an injury, or to oblige some person or persons with a fresh relation of his infamy; and sometimes it is concealed and cloaked under the appearance of a commendation. Here the detractor, though he may have as much malice in his heart, yet he would not have it appear, the more to save his own credit, and not to expose his neighbor the less; for

usually the poison sinks deeper, where the hearers are not apprised of the infection.

Now, direct or barefaced detraction is committed four ways. First—By imposing a false crime upon any one. Secondly—By publishiag a true one, and discovering a secret sin. Thirdly—By aggravating the fault committed. Fourthly—By putting an ill construction upon a good action. Those then are guilty of detraction, who out of anger, malice, envy, the desire of revenge, to save themselves harmless, or to avoid their own infamy, lay the fault on others, and charge them with crimes of which they are not guilty. Thus often in this world knaves escape, and the innocent suffer; and thus the guilty shelter themselves under the cover of their own crimes, which they falsely impose upon others, who are often destitue of means to clear themselves Thus innocent Joseph was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife of the crimes she herself was guilty of, as the scripture relates, Gen. xxix. And thus the modest Susannah was slandered by the two lecherous old men, as we read in Daniel. Upon this calumny, Joseph was cast into prison, and lay several years in chains. And Susannah, upon the evidence of those false witnesses, was condemned, and had been executed, had not Almighty God raised the prophet Daniel to discover the knavery, and inform the court of the slander.

There are others impatient upon a provocation, or even a just reprehension, and lash out every thing they know will vex their opposers, and often charge them positively with that for which they have not so much as well grounded suspicion. Thus when Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, as we read in the book of Tobias, chap. iii., chid her father's maid for a fault she had committed, she, instead of acknowledging and amending her fault, reproached her mistress with a false crime; what, says she, you murderess of men! will you kill me, as you have killed your seven husbands? who were slain (by the permission of God,) by the devil Asmodeus. Persons who allow passion to master reason and religion,

care not what they say, provided they can but gall those who have injured or vexed them. The more resemblance the calumny has of truth the fitter for their purpose, because they wound the deeper: the more credible the matter appears, no matter how false, if there be but circumstances to give a color to the slander. If I am guilty of this, say they, I did not do so, and so I was not found in such and such company, and the like.

There are also others, whose aim is secretly to undermine their neighbor; so they raise many suspicions of him, construe his actions in the worst sense, and fail not to turn and improve every circumstance to his ruin: thus the princes of the Philistines so poisoned the mind of Agris, king of Geth, by their surmises and injurious reports of David, (1 Reg.) that he took his employment from him, and sent him out of his country. This is but too common an effect of detraction, and people inferior to kings are imposed upon, and many innocent persons are thus brought to misery, infamy, and ruin. Though there are still in the world Josephs and Susannahs, Sarahs and Davids, that is, persons as truly innocent as they, and as severely censured, yet there are not always Daniels at hand to discover the knavery, and free the innocent; their cause is put off to another court, and will only be tried at the bar of heaven, where virtue shall triumph, and calumny receive its deserved punishment.

A second way of detraction is, when a person discovers to one, or more, the secret sin or sins of another; this way, as well as the former, is always a mortal sin; if the fault published be infamous, as commonly all mortal sins are. The sin is increased, when the discovery is made out of envy, malice, or revenge; but something more excusable, though always sinful, when it happens merely out of a talkative humor, and a certain itch of publishing their neighbor's faults.

This manner of detracting, though it be not quite so wicked as the former, yet, I am persuaded it sends more to hell, because it is more common, and restitution seldom made, persons being

unwilling to undergo the humiliation of being counted detractors, and of unsaying what they have said. I know they have not the remorse of conscience from this manner of defaming, because they cry, they report nothing but what is true: I must needs own, if its being true would take off the infamy, they might have some reason for what they say, but the contrary is too apparent; for persons lose their reputation as effectually by the publishing of the sins of which they are really guilty, as of those they are not, and lie under an equal censure.

There are some persons so given to this sin, that they no sooner come to the knowledge of another's fault, but it burns within them, and they cannot rest till they have acquainted some confident, and wretchedly oblige one or other with the whole history. "They are like women in labor," as Almighty God tells us by the mouth of Ecclesiasticus, "in continual pain till they be delivered of it." Do not you hear, say they, what such a one has done? For my part, I could never have believed it of him, but it is too true, and if you will promise me not to speak of it, I will tell you. Then comes out the obliging secret, which probably is the ruin of both their souls, as well as their neighbor's reputation. Certainly, did Christian charity rule in the heart of such a one, or had he any real design to have it buried in oblivion, he would let it die in his own breast, and never put it to the hazard of having it blazed about by another. What security can he have that his friend will keep it secret, when he could not himself? It is the usual fate of such secrets, when once let out, to be in a few days, if not in a few hours, the public talk of the town; and their neighbor's infamy, under the obligation of saying nothing of it, is as effectually published, as if it were cried in the market. There is something so enticing in the secret, where our neighbor's reputation is concerned, that those who know it not are as eager and greedy to hear it, as those who know it are to tell it.

A third way of detracting, is by aggravating the fault com-

mitted, or by adding some suspicions, conjectures, or malicious inferences of their own. Thus we see (as it is related in the second book of Kings, c. xiii.) when Absalom had invited all his brothers to an entertainment, and had killed Ammon only, the report was immediately carried to David, that Absalom had killed all the king's sons.

Thus people do, but too often, relate their own imaginations for matter of fact; sometimes what at first was reported only as doubtful, becomes by second or third-hand relators absolutely certain; and what was little at the beginning, increases so strongly by telling, that in a short time a molehill swells to a mountain. As little brooks, the farther they run, the larger they grow, and before they have gone many miles, become great rivers; the addition of some malicious circumstances, from their own suspicious brain, makes that often look very black which had no great harm in it when committed.

Besides, bare truth on the one side, is seldom worth the hearing; and on the other, few care to tell a silly long story. Unless, therefore, there be something reflecting in what they say, they know it will not be diverting; when the fact therefore discovers not sufficiently our neighbor's weakness, or exposes his folly, they add what is wanting to grace the relation, and please the hearers. Thus discreet and virtuous persons are frequently ridiculed and injuriously treated, and their supposed failings become a by-word to divert them at idle hours. If persons would consider how they would like to be served so themselves, they might conceive the injury they do others.

A fourth way of detraction is, by putting an ill construction upon a good action. Some persons' inclinations are so maliciously turned, that when they cannot find a flaw in their neighbor's actions, they will endeavor to blacken the intention and design of them. Thus the devil behaved himself, after he had been round the world, and Almighty God had asked him, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the

earth, a man simple and upright, and fearing God, and avoiding evil, and still keeping his innocence?" (Job, ii. 3.) The devil was sensible of the truth, and could not deny a tittle, yet he gives a malicious turn to all. It is not for nothing, says the devil, that Job fears his God; have you not fenced him round with blessings? Have you not given him health and wealth, large possessions abroad, and all happiness at home, in the comfort of dutiful, and the finest children of the east? Do but stretch forth your hand against him, and take from him what he has, and you will soon see he will be like his neighbors; he will curse you to your face. This no doubt was evidently false, yet it served the devil's turn; he was sufficiently convinced of Job's virtue, yet he would never give him a good word. And thus it is malicious and disorderly persons cast an envious eye upon those whose real virtue eclipses all they pretend to. When they are so far outdone by them, that their truly Christian lives become a reproach to their irregularities and disorders, though they cannot deny what is apparent to the world, yet they will endeavor to put an ill construction upon them, and, as far as they are able, to tarnish them with an ill, or less commendable intention. If they are frugal and moderate in their expenses, avoiding excess and intemperance, they will tell you, that it is not out of virtue, but a sordid, covetous humor; had they a heart to part with the money, they would make another figure. If they are pious and devout, they will attribute a great deal to hypocrisy; if they are as good as they appear to be, it is so much the better for them, but I can tell you how they served me, then you yourself shall be judge. Then out comes, it may be, a little indiscretion, or some story or other to their disadvantage, and this must be a rule and standard to measure all their other actions by. There is no virtue so eminent, but detraction will reach it; no life so blameless, but slander will make or find a flaw in it; no actions so charitable, or intentions so pure, but jealousy or envy will reproach or stain them with some self-ended or sinister design. Our

Saviour's own life and actions are a convincing proof of what I say. Did not the Pharisees blame and misconstrue his actions, and revile innocence itself? If he was a good man, say they, he would not break the Sabbath. Again, "Do not we say well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" (John viii. 48.) with many aspersions related in the gospel. So much spleen is lodged in an envious breast, and so much gall lies under a detracting tongue; no wonder then the best of human actions are often misrepresented, when those of the Son of God are so severely censured.

Besides these four open and direct ways of calumny, there are four other indirect ways of detracting: First—By denying the good our neighbor has done. Secondly—By lessening what he has done. Thirdly—By a cold commendation. Fourthly—By silence only. By these ways, though the slander be less apparent, it is not less injurious; for herein the detractor's aim is not to spare his neighbor's reputation, but his own; he would do him an unkindness, but would not appear to do it; they want no will to slander, but would not have the infamy of being reputed slanderers.

First, then, though they will not discover or impose a crime upon others, yet they will conceal or deny the good they have done, and this out of emulation, envy, or ill will. Thus when the company is much upon the commendation of a deserving person, they will tell you, they cannot think him to be so just, so honest, so charitable, or the like; to do this, or that, or the other; or upon some disobligation, or some advantage they propose to themselves, they will deny him to have such commendable qualifications as he really has, and is reputed to have. To my certain knowledge, they will tell you, he is not the man the world takes him to be; for my part, I cannot think him fit for such a charge; nor to be suffered in such an employment, or that he has parts to manage such an affair to the advantage of those that employ him, &c. Now, when this is contrary to truth, if the party injured

comes to no great damage, the detractor no thanks to him; but if he does, besides the recalling of the slander, he is obliged to repair the injury he has unjustly occasioned.

This manner of detracting happens sometimes without any words, or derogating expressions, by signs only. Thus when they hear the honesty, integrity, or capacity of a person they are no stranger to, much commended, they shake their heads, or so time a malicious smile upon all that is said, that they sufficiently signify he deserves not such a character, though in reality it be nothing but his due.

A second way of indirect detraction consists in lessening the good they know of another. When they are really sensible of what their neighbor deserves, and have not the face to deny the apparent truth, they make use of all the arguments they can to lessen the value and esteem of his worth, and endeavor to bring down a mountain to a molehill. For as charity makes the most of every good quality, envy makes the least; as charity hopes the best, envy always suspects the worst; and as charity covers a multitude of faults, envy exposes as many. Another way of lessening our neighbor's worth, is by balancing it with his imperfections. There are, and they know many excellent qualifications in those they think rival or outdo all they pretend to, and they are too visible to be denied; what do they then do? They hear of some imperfections, some oversights or indiscretions, and they shall be always upon these, and use them as a counterpoise to weigh against the glory of the other. This sort of detraction resembles the stone that fell upon, and beat down the famous statue mentioned in Daniel, (Can. ii. 32, 33.) whereof the head was of fine gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, the feet part of iron, and part of clay. The stone fell not on the golden head, nor silver breast, nor on the brass, nor iron, these would have stood the shock, but on the feet of clay, broke them, and so beat down the whole statue. If their neighbor have a head of gold, that

is, if he has wisdom, understanding, and prudence; or if he has wit, beauty, and discretion, you shall not hear a word of these; if he or she have a silver breast, or arms, a candid heart, much worth, and sincerity, if they have breeding, a modest behavior, if they are virtuous or prudent managers, &c. nothing of this shall be mentioned in their praise. In fine, what other qualifications soever they have, though less glorious, and, as it were, of an inferior metal, of brass or iron, they shall not be touched; but if they have feet of clay, that is, if they have any imperfections or small failing, they fall upon these, and, through their weakness, endeavor to overthrow all the rest. This stone was cast down without hands, from the mountain, (of passion or envy) that is, none were seen; this wants not a resemblance in the detractor, for he is never willing to appear, and always talks behind their back. It is strange, that, in the law of grace, where charity should rule our hearts and words, that we cannot find amongst all those commendable qualities, one flower to fly to, like the bee, and suck some honey thence, for the improvement of the hearers: but like beetles, always dwell in the dunghill, raking up and exposing their neighbor's imperfections.

A third way of detracting is by a cold commendation: thus being asked about such an one's behavior, or some worthy or commendable action, which they know he has certainly done; they will reply coldly, and tell, that indeed some say so, it is the report; but if it be really true, they are much changed from what they were; if they are saints, it is but lately: or they will come out with half a commendation, which has no other end but their greater disparagement. She is a very virtuous and modest young woman, and I have all imaginable esteem for her, but I think she was overseen or surprised on such an occasion. I take him to be a judicious person, and a worthy good man; but I fear he was too selfish, and a little treacherous in such a business. These, and such like *buts* that come in the end, are like the sting in the serpent's tail, that always carries poison in it. These

great, and high praises, which are concluded with real reflections upon the lives and manners of others, are like the raising of a workman's axe, which is only to cut the deeper. Now these murderers of men's reputation kill none but those whose funeral sermon they make beforehand.

The last way of detracting is by silence only, when occasioned by envy or malice. Here where a person is upon his preferment, or lives by his reputation, is much commended upon the general esteem he has in the world, and really deserves it; if in the mean time some in the company to whom his character cannot but be well known, as being a neighbor, or a particular acquaintance, maliciously says not a word to second the discourse; or, being asked his opinion, he returns no answer; is not this silence equivalent to a disparagement, especially when there is no apparent reason to suspect a grudge at the bottom.

Besides, there is another silence much more pernicious, and this is, when the detractor names nothing in particular, but gives broad hints of something considerable that he can discover. Well, such and such a one, say they, must hold their tongue before me, they are sensible what I know of them: they had not best meddle with what concerns me, for they know I can tell tales if I please. This, I say, is a most pernicious way of defaming, because it makes the hearers often suspect much worse, and more than the detractor means, and puts them upon an itching curiosity to know the particulars that are hinted at.

Here, dear Christians, you have seen what detraction is, and how many ways it is committed. Let me conjure you to clear your conscience for what is past, and to put a stop to the like wickedness, that you murder not for ever your own souls, by ruining or considerably prejudicing your neighbor's reputation; that charity may dwell there, where envy and passion have reigned, that you may endeavor to remedy, and not expose your neighbor's failings. This, as it is your great duty, I wish it may be your only end in speaking of his failings.

DISCOURSE V.

ON THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.—Exod. xx. 13.

THERE are, dear Christians, many ways, as you have already seen, whereby we may defame our neighbors; by imposing a false crime or defect upon any one; or by magnifying a real fault; by divulging a secret sin, how true soever: or by putting an ill construction upon a good action; by denying, or maliciously concealing, or very much lessening his good actions or qualifications to his real prejudice, or considerable disparagement.

From all and each of these heads arises the obligation of restitution, of honor, and reputation, and also temporal damages, if any are thereby occasioned. So that not only those are bound to this reparation of honor, who, out of ill will or mistake, accuse a person falsely of a crime, or, what is almost equivalent, very much augment a real fault; but also those who speak nothing but the truth, when they discover or divulge a private sin; because this is really defaming and violating another's right; for certainly a man has a right to his reputation, till he has lost it by his own fault. Now as long as his sin is private, though he be guilty in the eyes of God, he is innocent before men; and what honor soever he has lost with God, he has lost none with men. Those then that divulge this sin, (though it be to one person,) defame him unjustly before men, and are obliged, as far as they are able to restore his good name.

You know that the sacrament of penance is that means, and the only means left by our Saviour for the remission of the sins which we commit after baptism: "But except you do penance," says Christ, "you shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii. 5.) But there is this difference between the sins we commit against God, and those we commit against our neighbor, that true repentance,

joined with a clear and faithful confession, is a sufficient disposition to obtain of God pardon for those faults, whereby we only offend him. But when we have also injured our neighbor, either in his goods, or in his good name, which is more valuable, then over and above this disposition, restitution is to be made to him as far as we are able; restitution of his goods, if we have stolen, cheated, or any way detained them from him; restitution of his honor, if we have taken it away, or considerably lessened it, by backbiting, slander, detraction, and the like. Without this, do what penance you please, spend your days in sorrow, and your nights in tears, as David did; put on sackcloth and ashes, and wear them all your life; pour forth your soul to God in prayer; mortify your body by continual fasting; give all you have to relieve the poor, and confess your sins with all imaginable sorrow; all this will obtain no pardon from God without restitution; all this, without it, will be only a vain and fruitless penance, like that of Esau, like that of Antiochus, and like that of the reprobate. This is a certain and an undeniable truth, that no sin of injustice whatever, wherein our neighbor is considerably injured, either in his goods, or in his reputation, can be forgiven without restitution or reparation, as far as we are able.

If then you have divulged a secret sin of your neighbor to one or more, which you know him or her to have committed, and they thereby have lost their honor, reputation, or credit, in the world, and proves a considerable detriment to them: if you have imposed a false crime upon any, and laid that to their charge of which they are not guilty: if you have, out of envy or ill will discovered a private defect, though no sin, or imposed a false one to their real damage: if you have sowed discord by your stories, and occasioned misunderstandings, animosities, dissensions amongst friends, neighbors, or families, you must have the humiliation to recall and unsay what you have said, before whom you have said it, and the justice to repair the damages you have unjustly caused. And you must also use your best endeavors to reconcile those you

have set at variance, and to renew a friendly correspondence between them.

This, no doubt, is hard to flesh and blood, and so great an humiliation to our pride, that I fear it is seldom done as it ought We hear frequently of much detraction, but little restitution; we often hear of persons taking up injurious reports very lightly, divulging of them as indiscreetly, and no reparation made. We often hear of persons railing at one another, and in their quarrels, or falling out, divulging their secret faults, or charging them upon weak grounds with very great sins. But when do we hear of these making restitution, or asking pardon, for the injuries or disgrace their indiscretion, their passion, their envy, or malice has occasioned?

And yet not to do it is to renounce heaven; not to do it is to forsake the way of salvation, and all hopes of ever seeing God. (Eccles. xxviii. 30.) "Take heed, lest thou slip with thy tongue and fall in the sight of thy enemies, who lie in wait for thee, and thy fall be incurable unto death."

But suppose you have so much sense of another world, as not to forsake all pretension to heaven, and to run headlong into hell, but that you are willing to submit to all the humiliation your forward, indiscreet, or unbridled tongue has drawn upon you, and that you are resolved to unsay what you have said, and, as far as you are able, to re-establish those you have injured, in the same credit and reputation which they had before you took it away, that your neighbor may suffer nothing through your disorderly life and ungoverned passion. Grant, I say, you have so much christianity in you, and such a sense of your soul, as to do your part, do you think that you will prove successful in your recantation? Will the malicious world, that is so easy in crediting evil of your neighbor, and so backward in owning any thing that is good of him, believe what you recall or disown? Will the wicked world, that rejoices to hear of miscarriages in any, believe you, when you proclaim your own faults, and their innocence?

Will the envious world, that hearkens with so much eagerness to what is amiss, and feeds upon evil, concur with you to restore a lost reputation? Or will the censorious world, that criticises and finds many faults, even with our best actions, suffer itself to be undeceived when you own your error? The world will be apt to attribute your change of language to the wrong cause, not to your desire of doing justice, and owning the truth, but to some motive of interest, to the hopes of gaining, or the fear of losing something by them; and, therefore, they will say to themselves, it is not their innocence, but your interest, puts you upon unsaying what you have already said. But grant you prove so happy as to undeceive some, you have little hopes to work the same effect in thousands of others, whom the contagion of your slander has infected. Can you then re-establish this ecclesiastic, that married women, this young maid, that servant, this tradesman, &c., in the same credit and reputation which they had before your slander? Can, or will you repair the losses they have suffered by your malicious tongue? These blackmoors your indiscretion, envy, or passion, has made, can you wash them white again? Or, will all your future commendations take out the stains, which an ill and undeserved character has fixed upon them? "Take heed, lest thou slip with thy tongue, and fall in the sight of thy enemies, who lie in wait for you, and thy fall be incurable unto death." Eccl. xxiii. 30. Moses, as we read in Exodus, (chap. iv. 3, 7.) to show king Pharoah, by some miraculous action, that his commission for delivering his people was undoubtedly from God, cast down the stick he had in his hand, and turned it immediately into a snake: he took it again by the tail, and changed it into a stick, as before. The Egyptian magicians had not altogether the same success: they flung down each their sticks, and by their charms, turned them into snakes, but they could not change their snakes into sticks again, Moses's rod devouring them all. The devil's art, says Origen, can turn good into evil, but cannot change evil into good. I would turn the

sticks into snakes, but could not change snakes into sticks again. So the credulous and hasty, the wicked and envious detractors can easily disfigure a person of honesty and worth; and herein, God knows, they are generally but too successful. But they cannot so easily restore him to his former shape and credit; in all probability he will never again make the same figure in the world. They can turn a person of virtue and sober principles into a serpent, and make him pass for a man we ought to have an horror of; but they cannot disabuse the world again, and make them take him for what he really is, a man of piety. It is easy to raise a calumny on a married woman, or a young maid, and upon slight grounds, report them to be dishonest, and the report shall be devoured immediately by all the neighborhood, far and near; but it is not so easy to clear their reputation though never so innocent, and to restore their good name, of which they have unjustly robbed them.

It is no hard matter to fix a disadvantageous character upon any person whatever, from the highest to the lowest rank of men and women, and in all sorts of sins and defects, to which human frailty is liable. But daily experience shews us, that it is not an easy task to remove what a detracting tongue has once fixed, especially if there be any, though small grounds, for the aspersion. The world is so corrupt, that evil impressions, as they are received more willing, sink the deeper, and are therefore hardly removed: so that the Machiavilian maxim will generally prove true: *Detrahe fortiter, et aliquid adhœrebit;* fling dirt enough upon a man, and something will stick by him. And, therefore, whenever slander has turned a man into a serpent, he will in all probability, in the eyes of the world, remain a serpent for the rest of his life.

And thus we daily see what misunderstandings, what animosities, discord, and breaches of charity, are occasioned amongst friends and acquaintance, by an indiscreet intercourse of stories to and again, and how difficult an undertaking those meet with,

who, out of charity, endeavor to calm all, and renew a friendly correspondence, such as may be cordial, and not mere ceremony.

However, dear Christians, though it be morally impossible to repair the injuries our neighbor has suffered in his reputation, so as to restore him to his former esteem; yet this difficulty discharges not the detractor from the obligation of doing what he is able: for though the wounds which calumny make, are never healed without a considerable scar, yet better so healed than not at all. And this obligation is four-fold: first it is indispensable; secondly, it is personal; thirdly, it is not to be supplied by any other penitential act; fourthly, it is pressing, it will not allow of delays.

It is indispensable; for though the power which Christ has left to his church be great and universal, yet she cannot exempt any person, who has injured his neighbor, from doing him justice, as for as he is able; so she cannot excuse the detractor from the obligation of doing what he can to repair his injured neighbor's reputation. He may come to confession with tears in his eyes, with a heart pierced with sorrow for his fault, and a firm resolution also never more to detract. All this will not justify him. With all this he will be damned, if he refuses to recall his slander, and make reparation as far as he is able, for the injury he has done his neighbor; for, till justice is satisfied to the best of our power, we can never hope to see the face of God, for injustice cannot enter into heaven.

But, this obligation is not only indispensable, but also personal; you must discharge it yourself; you can neither have it supplied any other way, or by any other person. As the report is known to have come from, or have been spread by you, it will continue till it be known to be recalled by you. Had you cheated any, or stole their money or goods from them, you might contrive to make restitution, and conceal your fault. You might get a friend or a confessor to do you that kindness, and preserve your credit. But this is a theft of which you are known to be the author; there-

fore, till you yourself unsay what you have unjustly and injuriously said of your neighbor, his infamy and your injustice will certainly continue.

But you tell me you cannot overcome yourself, you cannot stoop to this humiliation, to eat your own words, and discredit yourself. What will the world take you to be? Your repentance, methinks, should now put you in mind what you have made the world take your neighbor to be. If you have not been ashamed to do him an ill turn, why should you now blush to do him justice? If you have been so wicked as to take away his good name, the sorrow you now have of your past fault will furnish you sure with so much virtue as to restore it. Alas! it is in vain to dispute it with yourself; you can never appease the anger of God, till you have discharged this duty. With what face can you approach to the throne of mercy to ask forgiveness, whilst the injuries you have done your neighbor are still unrecalled by you, and fresh in his mind? How can you sue for pardon from your common father, whilst the blood of your neighbor's murdered reputation is not yet stopped, but cries aloud to him for vengeance?

This duty is not only indispensable and personal, but so strict, that nothing can supply the want of it. In other cases, prayer, mortification, fasting, and alms-deeds, are powerful means to appease the anger of God. Moses, we read, interposed and prayed for an idolatrous people, and God heard his prayers, and forgave them. The wicked Ninevites had recourse to penance; they fasted, and put on sack-cloth and ashes, and God reversed their sentence. He recalled his threat, and spared the people, being appeased by their voluntary mortifications. Alms-deeds too are a powerful means to cleanse us from sin. "Give alms, (says Christ, Luke xi. 41.) and behold all things are clean unto you." "Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sins," (says Ecclesiasticus, iii. 33.) But here, should you, alas, join nights and days, and spend them all in prayer; should you give all you

have to the poor and spend the remainder of your life in penance, and all the mortifications discretion will allow; if at the same time, you resolve and endeavor not to restore the honor and reputation of which you have injuriously robbed your neighbor, your prayers, your tears, your fasts, your mortifications, and your alms will be all lost: God will never regard them; it being an undeniable maxim, that the sin is never forgiven, unless the injury be repaired, as far as you are able.

And this is to be understood of all sins of injustice whatever, whether occasioned by robbery, stealing, cheating, either in bargaining, gaming, miss-reckoning, detaining what is not our own, not paying just debts; giving away, or making use ourselves of what belongs to others; or, in fine, defrauding any person whatsoever, from the highest to the lowest, of what is their own; whether you be author, assistant, or only encourager and partaker of the injustice; for the sin cannot be forgiven, unless the injury be repaired, or the party injured remit the obligation.

The fourth and last condition of this obligation is, that it is pressing, it cannot be deferred and put off from time to time; for herein delays are particularly prejudicial. The longer an ill report continues, the more it spreads, and always augments by time; it is like that water the prophet Ezechiel mentions, which at the entrance was but up to his ancle, but increasing as he advanced he found, before he had gone far, that it was above his head. Or it is not much unlike that fire of which St. James speaks, that, at the beginning, appeared but little, yet carried by the wind, in a short time consumes the greatest buildings, and lays whole streets in ashes. It may be, those who first bring into question their neighbor's reputation, are not certain of the fact, but only from probable circumstances, or rash conjectures, leave in their hearers strong suspicions of his guilt; but those to whom the relation is made, will say to themselves, to be sure he is guilty; and so they will report it about. Alas! if a stop be not soon put to this torrent that is continually increasing, this

poor man or woman's credit will soon be buried under the water If you put not out quickly this fire, that flies from house to house, in a little time there will remain no more of a well-grounded reputation than a few ashes. You ought therefore, as soon as possibly you can, to recall what you have indiscreetly, rashly, or maliciously spoken to the prejudice of your neighbor's reputation, in any considerable matter.

Now, if this be undoubtedly our indispensable obligation, we ought to be extremely upon our guard, for fear we fall into any sin of injustice, either in words or deeds; that we neither rob our neighbor of his good name, nor his goods; either out of an itch of punishing his faults, a tattling humor to lessen him in the world; or out of a covetous temper, to enrich or better ourselves by what we rob him of; for, besides that we are accountable to God for the sin, we are also accountable to our neighbor for the injustice. The humiliation of asking him pardon, and unsaying what we have said, is enough to imbitter the sweetest revenge, and certainly outweighs all the satisfaction of publishing his private faults. And the restoring of what we have taken, disposed of, or detained unlawfully, either in money or money's worth, robs us of all the fruit of our injustice, and nothing remains with us but the guilt of our sin, and the punishment due to it, which infallibly must be undergone in this life, or more severely in the next. For not to make satisfaction is entirely to renounce heaven, and deliberately to make choice of hell.

Those whose judgments are so thoroughly depraved, as to persuade themselves that there is no God; or if there be, that he does not punish wickedness; that he regards not what passes in this world, or that sin does not separate them from him, may reap some temporal advantage from the fruits of injustice; but they will pay dear for it, when they shall be forced to suffer eternally without being able ever to satisfy.

But Christians who believe in God, and that there is a heaven, know that injustice in any kind cannot enter there; and that

they must recall what they have divulged to another's prejudice, or laid wrongfully to his charge; that they must divest themselves of what they have unlawfully taken, or unjustly detain from any whoever they be, poor or rich, master or servant, or they shall never enter into that happy abode prepared for the just. Of all sins then, injustice in a Christian is not only wicked, but indiscreet above expression.

Tell us then, what must we do who have defamed or slandered any person? How must we restore their good name? The answer is much easier than the practice. Tell me what you would do, if any one had defamed you? Would not you endeavor to find out the author, and make him or her recall what they have said? Would not you write to your friends and acquaintance, and make many visits here and there to clear yourself from the aspersion, and justify your innocence? Would you not in all company, beat down the injurious report, and shew how false and groundless it was? Have the like compassion for those you have injured, and be as solicitous to regain his or her reputation, as if the case were your own. Be not content only to own your fault, but ask forgiveness of the party you have injured: and then do your best to disabuse the neighborhood, and all those to whom the report of their infamy has reached.

But it may be, they will not credit me when I go to unsay what I have already said; or, should I disabuse some, how many hundreds will still retain an ill opinion, and will never be persuaded to the contrary? This, I fear, is but too true; and therefore, it ought to give us a horror of this sin. Nevertheless, you must do your best, and if you can disabuse any, it is well; if others still continue obstinate in their ill opinion, they must look to it. Wo be to them who believe you unto evil, and will not believe you unto good; who believe you when you slander, and will not believe you when you make satisfaction. Your comfort is, when you have done your duty, not you, but they, must answer for the misbelief.

I had rather do anything than this: I will fast, I will pray, I will give alms, any satisfaction rather than this recantation. What will people say, what will they think of me? Dear Christians, was your repentance sincere, or had you a true sense of what you have injuriously made the world say, and think of your neighbor, you would not be backward to do him this right: all other satisfaction can do him no good, and therefore, cannot discharge your debt: it is in vain to endeavor to shuffle off a duty, which God, justice, and your own salvation, require of you, and is indispensable.

Now what a reckoning have those proud, envious, and malicious spirits upon their hands, who make raillery their profession, and detraction their practice? where satire generally follows both their tongue and pen? They seldom speak but they reflect on one another; and seldom write, but they dip their pens in gall.

From the instructions I have given you of detraction, you see what it is, and how many ways it is committed, and that being a sin of injustice, is not to be forgiven without restitution. You have reason then, not to think that advice of the Holy Ghost unseasonable, when he bids you take heed, lest perhaps, you sin by your tongue, and fall before your enemies, who lie in wait for you, and your fall become incurable unto death. You have reason to beg of God a particular grace to preserve you from the sins of the tongue. This even holy David begs. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and a door round my lips: incline not my heart to evil words; to make excuses in sins." (Psalm cxi. 3, 4.) And the wise man was so sensible of this necessary caution, that he cries out, "Who will set a guard before my mouth, and a sure seal upon my lips, that I fall not by them, and that my tongue destroy me not." (Eccles. xxii. 33.) Join your prayers with these, and with the same earnestness beg of God to preserve you from uncharitable discourse for the future; and to give you a steady resolution to submit unto the humilia-

tion of recalling what you have said amiss, and injuriously wronged your neighbor in. For this is the only way to deserve pardon from God.

DISCOURSE VI.

ON THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.—Exod. xx. 13.

Never to speak of our neighbor's private faults may be a great damage to them and to others, and a great detriment to ourselves; and to speak of them out of ill will to the persons, is always prejudicial to them, to the hearers, and to our own souls. Let us then avoid these two extremes, and see when, how, and to whom you are to speak of the sins and failings of others.

There are some persons so religiously silent as to their neighbor's faults, that they will never speak of them, though their speaking to a discreet and fit person might prevent them, and (it may be) the eternal ruin of their souls; this silence they think to be excusable in the sight of God, and satisfy themselves with saying, What is it to me? I will not meddle with their concerns, let them look to them. Others again refrain from speaking out of fear of gaining their ill will, the censure of others, of drawing some temporal damage upon them. The silence is often very criminal.

There are persons who are conscious of some considerable failing, or failings of others, and they will be sure to keep their council, till they are ruined, out of the motive of friendship. But if these friends happen to fall out, then they begin to rip up, and to publish all the things they know, or have at any time heard of them, to their great infamy; and this is a very criminal detraction. They refuse to discover out of charity, for their real good, to a friend who might advise them, what they divulge out

of anger, or malice, to their infamy and discredit, before all the world. To direct you, therefore, in your duty as to this particular,

You must first observe, that we are all obliged to correct our neighbor when we know him guilty of any considerable fault, which tends to his own or others spiritual ruin, or very considerable temporal damage, privately by ourselves if we can, or by the help of others, whose advice is likely to be more effectual than ours. This is the command of Christ: "If thy brother shall offend against thee, go, and rebuke him, between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother. And if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may stand." Matt. xviii. 15.

Secondly. We must do this with prudence and discretion, that we may not provoke, but gain him. "If he hears you," says Christ, "you have gained him;" that is, contributed so far to save his soul. Without the first we cannot remain in charity, which obliges us to love our neighbor, and doubtless his spiritual good more than his temporal; without the second we shall do him little good.

First then, we are obliged to correct our neighbor, all and every one of us, not only superiors, those under them; parents, their children; masters and mistresses, their servants; but all and every one in particular, who know of any other's fault that is considerable; and this in any of these four circumstances. First, when we do not only suspect, but know that a person has committed such or such a fault, and is likely to fall into it again, if some care be not taken to prevent a relapse.

Secondly. When he endeavors to draw others into the like fault by his behavior, discourse, example, or persuasions; and so be the occasion of their spiritual ruin.

Thirdly. When we observe a person, or persons, to be in such dangerous circumstances, that in all probability they will fall into

some considerable sin, if means be not used to put a stop to the apparent danger.

Fourthly. When the wickedness of another, either is at present, or is likely to prove a considerable damage to another in spirituals or in temporals. In these occasions, if we cannot prevent the evil ourselves, we may acquaint another, whose advice or reprehension may be more prevailing. So our Saviour says, "If he will not hear thee, take one or two others with thee."

This obligation, which we have of correcting our neighbor, and preventing his sin, and the danger of others being corrupted by it, or considerably endangered, is not only built upon the express words of Christ, so often cited, and which are abundantly sufficient for our direction; but also upon the precept of charity, the love of God, and our neighbor, which we are all obliged to have in our hearts.

To love God, no doubt, is to love what he loves, and to hate what he hates; to esteem what he esteems, and to contemn what he contemns. Now, since God hates nothing more than sin, certainly if we love God, we shall never endure sin either in ourselves or others, but use our best endeavors to prevent it. Doubtless, if we are negligent in this point, it is evident we love not God. Again, since God esteems nothing more than piety and good works; certainly, if we did love God, we should endeavor to reclaim sinners, and gain as many to him as lay in our power. We should endeavor to draw them out of vice to the practice of virtue, either by ourselves or others. In fine, did we love God, we could not be without concern and trouble, to see him so much dishonored, by sinners, both in private and public, and not apply what remedies we know are in our power. Men are zealous for the honor of their king, and put up no affronts that fall upon him; can they see then the king of kings abused by sinners, and remain cold and indifferent, and yet pretend to love him? You cannot hear a friend abused, but you stand up in his defence; how can you then pretend to love God, and be a

witness of his injuries, without endeavoring any relief? The correcting of our neighbor then, and endeavoring either by ourselves or others, to reclaim him from evil, or prevent his future relapses, or his drawing any other into sin, is grounded on the love we owe to God, which cannot be in our hearts, if upon occasion it appears not in our actions.

Secondly. This duty is built upon the love we owe our neighbor. We are doubtless obliged to love our neighbor as ourselves, and thereupon to procure him what good we can, and to prevent what evils are likely to fall upon him; and in the first place, those that are most dangerous and prejudicial to him. Now, of all the evils that can befall him, sin is the greatest and most prejudicial; the greatest obligation then we can have towards our neighbor is to prevent his falling into sin, or his being drawn unto it.

You know, dear Christians, that persons will be condemned at the judgment to everlasting flames, as our Saviour assures us, for the neglect of the corporal works of mercy; with how much greater reason may they expect this terrible sentence for the neglect of spiritual works of mercy? "I was hungry," says Christ, "and you gave me not to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me not to drink; I was naked, and you covered me not," &c (Matt. xxv. 42, 43.) "Therefore," says he, "Depart from me you cursed into everlasting fire." If not relieving our neighbor, in corporal necessities, be so severely punished, what must those expect who have been wanting in relieving him in his spiritual wants? As far as our soul is more valuable than the body, and our spiritual good more to be regarded than our temporal, so much our obligation is greater to prevent (as far as we are able) his spiritual than his corporal death; that is, to prevent his falling into sin, than his falling into temporal want.

Christ came not into the world to relieve our corporal, but spiritual necessities; he spent not his labor and his oil in preaching, teaching, and instructing, to heal the diseases of our bodies,

but of our souls. In fine, he died not on the cross to redeem us from temporal afflictions, but from sin and damnation. This same charity then, (if there be the least spark of it in our hearts) ought to fill us with the same zeal for our neighbor's true and real good, for the good of his soul, and to use what means we can, either by ourselves or others, to prevent his falling into sin, when we see the danger.

How highly blameable then are those in the sight of God, who see the secret disorders of others, or their injustice, and unwarrantable practices, and are unconcerned at them! They say to themselves, What is it to me? It is their business, not mine: if they do amiss, let them look to it; let every one carry his own burden—I have enough of my own—I need not take the charge of others.

What is it to me, say you? This indeed was the answer Cain, one of the worst of men, gave to Almighty God, who asked him where his brother Abel was? "What is it to me, am I my brother's keeper?" says he. (Gen. iv. 9.) This was the answer which the Scribes and Pharisees gave when Judas flung back the money he had received, saying, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." (Matt. xxvii. 4.) What is that to us, say they, look thou to it? What is it to you, say you, when you see your brother in danger to be ruined? Why, are you not obliged to love him as yourself? Is not this an indispensable duty, and such as (if not complied with in many circumstances) may be your damnation? Why, can you really love your neighbor, and stand by unconcerned, and see him ruined, when you might hinder it? Should you see a person in danger to be drowned, and thereupon perish by your neglecting to reach your hand to help him out, would you not think yourself guilty of his death? When you see him then in danger of being ruined by sin, by some debauched and dangerous company, by some unjust and unwarrantable practice, or by some irrecoverable indiscretion, and take no care to prevent it; can you think yourself excusable

in the sight of God? Is that soul, for whom he has died, no concern to you? Is that soul, for whom he spared neither labor nor pains, but purchased it even with his blood, no concern to you?

Yes, dear Christians, the day of judgment will convince you, that it was your concern, when you find yourself involved in his ruin, for neglecting to correct, admonish, or endeavor to prevent his sin. either by yourself or others, at least, as far as in you lay. It is true, sinners will not always mend upon correction, counsel, or admonitions; but yet, when we have done this, as zealously, and as often as prudence shall advise, we have discharged our duty both to God and them; and therefore shall not be answerable for the loss of their souls. So Almighty God tells us by his prophet Ezechiel, that if "thou dost not speak to warn the wicked man from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand." (chap. xxxiii. 8.) Whence it follows evidently, that the ruin of those that perish by our silence, or want of using due endeavors, will be charged upon us another day; and therefore their failings concern you much more than it may be you have hitherto imagined.

There are other reasons which move some to neglect fraternal correction. The fear of disobliging people, the trouble of it, or the apprehension of their malice against them for it, being unwilling to draw any trouble upon themselves. Thus some will not reprehend their children or friends, for fear of making them uneasy or losing their affection. Some will not correct a servant they find proper for them, careful, and faithful in their business, though otherwise he may be given to many vices, as swearing, debauchery, lewdness, &c. for fear he should leave them. Thus they will not inform of others, whom they have no hopes to bring to their duty by their counsel or persuasions, for fear of drawing their ill-will, or that of others, upon themselves, and the like. Is this to practice the gospel? Is this to act the part of a parent, a master, a friend, or of a Christian? To balance our little temporal concerns, our ease, or our interest, with their eternal

salvation? What becomes of the precept of fraternal correction? To whom was it that Christ gave this command: "If thy brother sin against thee, go and reprehend him secretly; if he hear you not, take one or two more with you," whose advice, or reprehension may be more effectual? The prophet Isaiah trembled for being something wanting in reprehending vice. "Wo be to me," says he, "because I held my peace." (chap. vi. 5.) But how many Christians are there that see ill things, and many injustices carried on privately, and hold their peace, and live without concern, as if they had nothing to answer for it!

But you may tell me they will not mind what you say, they will not mend upon your speaking, and some, it may be, will only give you a curse for your advice, so it is to no purpose for you to speak. Dear Christians, you know not how successful your words may prove until you have made some trial; God may give a blessing to your charity, to your zeal, and open their hearts to hear you: however, if they refuse to hear, it is their fault, but if you neglect to speak, it is yours, unless you acquaint some other, whose prudence, interest, or authority, may have more weight with them.

When you are conscious then of the sins of others, into which they are likely to relapse, or to draw others into the like, or are such as carry injustice with them, you are obliged out of charity to God and your neighbor, to use means to prevent them, secretly, by yourself, if you can, or by the assistance of others, one, or more, as the business may require. And this is not detraction, but fraternal correction; not a sin, but a duty. And herein when the sin is private, you ought, as much as you are able, to take care of, and preserve the credit and reputation of the person you would correct.

Besides, as to the speaking of the faults of the absent, you may take this rule, delivered by Gerson, (to. 2. p. 353.) a man of great piety and learning. An action in itself indifferent, is rendered good or bad by the circumstances, and chiefly by the

end for which it is done. Now there are six general ends why we speak of what is evil in our neighbor. First—When it is purely for the instruction of those that are present, that they may beware, and be cautious to avoid the like; but this must be only when the sin is entirely public. Secondly—When we discover a private failing, for the caution of another to prevent his spiritual ruin. Thus when we see a well-meaning person ready to be drawn into familiarity, and to place his confidence in those he presumes good, and who in reality are quite the contrary men of ill principles, and debauched lives, capable to lead them into all evil. This may be told to the innocent person for his caution, when you go upon sure grounds, and not bare suspicion; and the like of any other fault. Thirdly—When it is for the real good of those we speak of, that they may be corrected, and brought to amendment by those we speak to, being persons proper for that end; as their parents, superiors, directors, or best friends. Fourthly—When we speak out of a great compassion for their misfortune, to move others to pray more earnestly for their conversion and amendment; when they are persons who have a real concern for them. For these four ends, it is lawful and meritorious to speak of the failings of others, provided there be no other end intermixed with them; and great care be taken, that they speak only the truth, without any exaggeration, and say no more, nor to any other person, than what there present instruction and caution require.

There are two ends of speaking of the failings of others, which are most common in the world, and always evil. First—When they speak of them out of mere curiosity, and an itch of talking of others, or for discourse sake, to pass away the time. Secondly When they do it out of anger, hatred, envy, and the like; or to have them discredited, or less esteemed in the world. Both these ways of speaking of other's failings, are not without sin, which is greater or less, according to our ill will, and the damage done to others, in their credit, reputation, or preferment.

These rules, I think, are sufficient to correct those who bear a good conscience, and are willing to do their duty; who are desirous to put a stop to the spreading of vice, and unwilling to see any suffer by other's wickedness; nor care to meddle farther with other people's faults, than may contribute to their good, or the good of others, to their correction and amendment, or the retrieving or preserving others from the like evil ways.

However, this correction ought to be performed with prudence and discretion, that the evil we endeavor to beat down, may thereby be amended, and not increased.

The humor and temper of persons are so very different, and the occasions and circumstances of evil so various, that it is a hard matter to find out a way how to correct a sinner profitably, so that the correction may contribute to his amendment. Sometimes he dissembles and deceives us; sometimes he keeps out of the way and avoids us; sometimes he is brutish, and curses us; sometimes he is proud, and contemns us; sometimes he is wilful, and troubles not his head with what we say, &c.

In all these various tempers prudence is to be used, and great charity; there ought to be a great steadiness of mind to oppose vice with resolution, and yet a great condescension to conform ourselves to the condition and circumstances of our brethren. An easy and familiar way suits best with equals, but respect is due to those above us; and authority ought to be used to those below us, or who are under our care and charge. In regard of all these, zeal is necessary; but it ought to be without harshness: compassion also must not be wanting; but it ought to be without flattery. There are some of so rough a temper, that a mild reprehension is lost upon them; if they are not severely chid, they will not believe they have done amiss. Others are of so soft a nature, that they are entirely dejected by a severe correction; and some are so buried in sin, that they are deaf to all good advice, and therefore need a loud call to raise them to virtue. Others sin more out of ignorance than malice; so only to let

them know their duty, is motive enough to induce them to amend. Some are of so haughty a spirit, that they will endure no superiority, or suffer any to tell them of their faults; these ought to be desired to consider seriously with themselves, to what end the ways they take do lead them, and what at last must prove the ill-consequences, if care be not taken to prevent it. Others will hear all you can say, own their fault, and promise to amend; and yet for all that, take no care to amend; these if possible, ought to be made sensible that it is to little purpose to intend to do good, unless we really do it; for none are so foolish as to take promises for payment, how can they then think that God will?

To correct then our neighbor with profit, our zeal ought to be mixed with prudence and discretion; particularly to take care as far as possible, never to give any reprehension in passion; for one fault can never correct another well. Pride may reprehend, but never amend pride; nor will a haughty carriage humble a proud spirit, but rather inflame it. A mild instruction works more upon a sinner towards his amendment, than a biting reproach, and prayers often prevail more than threats. However, when a severe reprehension is necessary, as it is but too often, reason, and not passion, ought to have the management of it, and it ought to be tempered with so much compassion, that it may appear that you desire to reclaim, and not to insult over the sinner. Neither must we think we have done our duty, when we have once or twice corrected a sinner; we must have patience and perseverance in this charitable employment; and therefore, St. Paul says to Timothy, (iv. 2.) "Preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine."

If this be so, as no doubt it is, we have little reason to wonder at the small effect which so many reprehensions and corrections usually have; they are not commonly given with that prudence, zeal, and discretion, as it is likely to work upon the temper of a sinner. Alas! it is but too often that passion has a greater share

in it than reason, pride than charity, prejudice than truth, anger than justice; and they seek rather, in a humor to vent their own passion, than the real good of the offender, and sinners remain sinners still: this indiscretion many times does more harm than good.

Moreover, besides the difference of quality, there is a great regard to be had to their age and sex; though elderly persons may fall into many faults; yet, says St. Paul, "An ancient man rebuke not, but entreat him as a father; young men as brethren; old women as mothers; young women as sisters, in all chastity;" (Matt. xviii.) that is, with that reservedness and decency as becomes the honor of their sex, says the apostle.

No doubt as grey hairs move us to have a respect for those who bear them, and naturally check all manner of harshness, in the admonishing such of their faults; so we ought to have a compassion for the unsteadiness and indiscretions of youth; and as we easily bear with those who have lost their reason, so we ought to have some condescendence for such as are not come to the full use of it, especially in faults where their indiscretion appears more than their malice. The weaker sex requires more reservedness in the manner of their correction, and though their faults ought to be reprehended and chastised, yet it must be done so that nothing offend their chaste ears, and that modesty, which is the greatest ornament of their sex.

You see, dear Christians, the obligation you have of fraternal correction, which charity imposes upon every one, even that love which we owe to God and our neighbor, and whereupon the whole gospel depends, as our Saviour has told us. And by thus complying with this duty, you will not only discharge the command our Saviour imposes on you, but also deserve a reward from him; "for those that instruct many into justice, shall shine like stars in the firmament for perpetual eternity."

DISCOURSE VII.

ON THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.—Exod. xx. 13.

THIS fifth commandment does not only forbid the three sorts of murder already spoken of, but it also commands several duties; amongst which the love of our neighbor has the first place, because it gives birth and life to all the rest. If we love our neighbor, we shall fail in no duty towards him: if we love him not we shall scarce comply with any as we ought. And St. John farther assures us, that life and death depend upon our having this virtue; "We know, (says he, 1 Epistle, iii. 14.) that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." This mutual charity, or the love of one another, for God's sake, is so powerful with him, that it restores the life of grace to us, and plants in our souls the seed of eternal life. It is this that makes saints upon earth; and the same consummates their happiness in heaven. But if we have not this charity, though we seem to live, we are really dead to God; and if we hate our brother, we are guilty of having murdered him. They are the very words of the same apostle in the same place; "He that loveth not, (says he, ver. 15.) abideth in death: whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer, and you know, (says he,) no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself."

The want then of this brotherly love occasions a double spiritual murder, our own, and that of our neighbor. For he that hates his brother, certainly robs himself of the life of grace, and the hopes of an eternal life. And at the same time he murders in his own heart, him at whose life he repines, and whose death he desires. We must love, therefore, one another, that we be not doubly guilty of the breach of this commandment, *Thou shalt not kill.*

Now, dear Christians, what should chiefly move us to love one another, is the frequent pressing of this duty in the holy scripture. In how many places, both in the Old and New Testament, are we commanded to love our neighbor as ourselves? How often does Christ, and that in the most pressing terms, recommend this to us? "This is my commandment," says he, "that you love one another." (John xv.) As if he had said, If you have any love for me, and if I have deserved any thing at your hands, oblige me in this, *Love one another.* And again, as if he feared gratitude would not work sufficiently on our warped, or ill-turned nature, he lays his command upon us: "This I command you," says he, "that you love one another." And in the 13th of St. John, v. 35. "By this," says he, "shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." The mark then, or character of a disciple, or a true Christian, is the loving of one another, as Christ has loved us. And therefore we must not confine our love to those who love us, or deserve it from us, or have never injured us, for this the pagans do; but by an unlimited and Christian generosity we must love all, even those who deserve it not from us; all, even those who have injured us. And, in this, all shall know, that we are his disciples, who loves us without interest, without merit, and after repeated injuries.

A second motive that induces us to keep this command is, because it is clear, it is short, it is profitable, and it is easy. These are four most desirable circumstances in a command so important. It is short, so any one may remember it. It is profitable, that our own great interest may lead us to it; for not only a great, but an eternal reward is annexed to this duty; such is the goodness of God, to intermix with his commands our greatest blessings. And, what is above all, it is also easy; for that is certainly easy, that may be performed by any body, at any time, and in any place; by the poor as well as the rich; by the sickly as well as the healthful, early or late, by night or by day, at

home or abroad, in any circumstance of our lives. So Almighty God tells us, "This commandment, that I command thee this day is not above thee, nor far off from thee: nor is it in heaven, that thou shouldst say: which of us can go up to heaven to bring it unto us, and we may hear and fulfil it in work? Nor is it beyond the sea, that thou mayst excuse thyself, and say: which of us can cross the sea, and bring it unto us: that we may hear, and do that which is commanded." (Deut. xxx. 11, &c.) And so our Saviour tells us, that "my yoke is sweet, and my burden light," (Matt. xi. 30.) for the same reason.

A third motive is the example of all other animals whatever: For, as Ecclesiasticus says, "Every beast loveth its like." (chap. xiii. 19.) The lion, the wolf, or the bear, how cruel soever they be to other creatures, they never prey on their own kind, but are friendly to one another. If we therefore love not one another in this we are worse than brutes.

A fourth motive is the affinity, or rather consanguinity, that is amongst us all; we naturally love our own flesh and blood, and affect this or that person, because it is our brother, our sister, our nephew, or our neice. Now, let us but look on Adam and Eve, and we are all brothers and sisters. Almighty God could have so ordered our creation, as to have created in the beginning ten thousand men, and as many women; or he could have peopled the whole world at once, but he made only Adam. He could also have made Eve of the same earth; but he took her out of the side of Adam, and formed her of one of his ribs, because he would have us all come from one, that we might all be always one; he would have no distinction in our nature, that there might be no exceptions in our love. And we were also made for the same end, to enjoy the same God, that no difference of interest might occasion either envy or jealousy; for God is all to all. As the sun shines no less on me for shining on others, so God will be no less enjoyed by one for being enjoyed by others. His infinite being has infinite treasure for all.

A fifth motive is our spiritual affinity; as we are the sons and daughters of Adam, we are all brothers and sisters, but much more as we are the children of God, made to his own likeness, and redeemed by his only Son. Our affinity is great as we are men, but much greater as we are Christians. As we are men and women, Adam is our common father, and Eve our mother. Hence mutual charity ought so far to surpass mutual affection, as our eternal is above our temporal father. And as our mother, the church, brings us forth to a nobler life, and a better inheritance. Ah! when through this divine and mutual love we prove so happy as to be associated to the heavenly choirs, we shall find there more and kinder brothers and sisters than any we left behind us.

Sixthly. They certainly ought to be loved and regarded by us, who are so much valued and loved by God. God loves, and so loved all mankind, as to send his only Son down from heaven to make them easy and happy. For love of men, all and every one, Christ, the eternal Son of God, came into the world, led a poor and painful life, and underwent a cruel death. This price given by God for the love of men, how should it raise our love and esteem, even for the meanest, and make us set a price upon what God so much values? Think on him, who so much loved us all, as to wash us in his blood, to cleanse us from sin; then look upon your brother, even the most disagreeable, through this perspective, through this motive, and you cannot but value the judgment of God. When you see then a miserable creature, though an enemy, say to yourself, Christ died for the love of this, and then refuse him your charity or assistance if you can.

The seventh motive is the example of the angels; they love us all, watch over us day and night, and never deny their assistance to the worst of us. So Christ says to us, "See that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say to you, that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father, who is in heaven." Matt. xviii.

If these happy spirits, who continually behold the glory of God, are so kind and punctual in their duty; can we undervalue those whom they thus regard? Can we refuse to love those whom they serve?

The eighth motive may be the extreme agreeableness of this virtue to Almighty God: "With three things," says Ecclesiasticus, "my spirit is pleased, which are approved before God and men; the concord of brethren, and the love of neighbors, and man and wife that agree well together." Chap. xxv.

A ninth motive may be drawn from our love to God; for when we truly love a friend, we love all that resembles him for his sake: if, then, we really love God, we should love all who are like him, upon the same account. Now, all mankind, you know, are made to the likeness of God, his very image is stamped upon all their souls; sure then we should love them all, if we really loved him.

A tenth motive may be drawn from the analogy there is between a natural and mystical body; the love that is found in the one, ought in proportion to appear in the other. There is no disagreement in the members of the same natural body: the head quarrels not with the hands, nor the hands with the feet, but all love each other, and combine to give a mutual assistance. As believers, we are the church of God, and a mystical body, and Christ himself does us the honor to be our head. As part then we must love each member, and the whole of which we are a part. St. Paul presses this argument to the Christians of Corinth: "That there might be no schism in the body, but the members might be mutually careful one for another. And if one member suffer any thing, all the members suffer with it; or, if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Ep. Cor. xii. 25, 26.) This is the true emblem of a Christian, of one that is truly a member of that body, of which Christ is the head; we ought to have a great care of all and each, especially when they are in distress, and want our help or assistance, we should interest our-

selves in their concerns, and so far share in their misfortunes or sufferings, as to be uneasy till they are well, and omit nothing in our power, that may contribute to their relief; then we shall receive a mutual comfort, and rejoice at their deliverance as much as at our own.

The eleventh motive to excite us to a mutual love, is the many advantages which are found therein: First, a mutual assistance, and a common protection. "It is better, therefore," says the wise man, "that two should be together than one, for they have the advantage of their society." (Eccles. iv. 9.) Secondly, it occasions a great plenty of all things; for what we have not ourselves, we have from our friends. Thirdly, by it our prayers are more available, and more powerful with God; "for where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," says Christ. (Matt. xviii. 20.) Fourthly, it is a mutual exhortation and encouragement to virtue; we are willing and desirous, on the one side, to have those we love, share in the happiness we either have, or aim at, and, on the other, we easily follow the good example of those we affect. Fifthly, it brings a mutual comfort in troubles; for the cordial advice of those who are our friends, takes off the edge of grief, and allays the bitterness of sorrow, as the wise man expresses it: "Ointment and perfumes rejoice the heart, and the good counsels of a friend are sweet to the soul." Prov. xxvii. 9.

The last motive may be drawn from the many evils which are occasioned for want of brotherly love: such as divisions, animosities, hatred, envy, jealousy, backbiting, slander, rash judgments, and the like. And therefore our Saviour, who had always an entire and constant love for us all, the evening before he departed out of this world, he earnestly recommended us to his Father; and, with pressing instances, begs these virtues of love and unity for us all: "Holy Father," says he, "keep them in thy name whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we also are." John xvii. 11.) And again, "the glory thou hast given to me

I have given to them, that they may be one, as we are one, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be consummate in one." Then he concludes his prayer in these words: "Father, I have manifested your name to them, and will manifest it to the end, that the love wherewith you have loved me may be in them, and that I myself may be in them." Such a desire had the Son of God to leave amongst us this legacy of mutual love, even the same charity whereby his Father loves him, and he loves his Father, that we may in the end be consummate in God, and for ever be glorified in him, and he in us.

Now, dear Christians, we have all these convincing and pressing motives, that we are to love one another; what therefore remains is to see how, and in what manner we are to do it.

The sacred scripture lays before us three patterns, whereby we are to guide ourselves in the love of our neighbor, and discharge our duty to all. The first pattern that is given to us to copy after is the love of ourselves. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt. xxii.) The second pattern is the love wherewith Christ has loved us: "This is my commandment," says he, (John xv.) "that you love one another, as I have loved you." The third pattern is that love which the members of the same body bear one another: "as in one body," says St. Paul, "we have many members, but all the members have not the same office, so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." (Rom. xii. 4, 5.) These ought to be the models which we must have in our eye, and the patterns we must consult when any difficulty or doubt arises about the love we ought to have for others.

First. We must love our neighbor as ourselves; now certainly we love ourselves with a sincere love, with an universal love, and in reality but too sincere. I cannot but own our nature is inclined to dissimulation, and we may sometimes pretend more affection than really we have; but when this is, it is always to

others, never to ourselves. In loving ourselves we are always thoroughly sincere: here we never counterfeit, our heart and actions go together. The love of ourselves is also universal; whether we be weak or perfect, foolish or wise, poor or rich, sick or healthful, peevish or good-humored, abroad or at home, we always love ourselves. The love of ourselves is also efficacious; it is not compliments we bestow upon ourselves, or mere words that cost us nothing, but it is real services; we are always as good as our words, and never disappoint ourselves, but against our wills. Now, what follows from hence? It follows evidently, that we are obliged to love our neighbor as ourselves, we must love him with a sincere love, an universal love, and an efficacious love; truly, without dissimulation, at all times, and in all circumstances, willing to do him the best services we can in his real wants and necessities.

Here is a great deal in few words; let us often look on this pattern, to imprint it deep in our minds, that neither length of time, unnecessary business, nor any disobliging behavior from others, may ever blot it out of our minds.

To discharge this duty then, it is not enough to wish him no evil, but we must do him a kindness, when his circumstances require it, and ours will allow it. It is not enough to tell him we will do him a kindness when occasion serves, if we can then relieve him, and his present wants call upon us. It is not enough to forbear disturbing him in the quiet possession of his own, but we must aid him in the recovery of what he is unjustly deprived of, when it can be no damage or inconvenience to us. It is not enough to abstain from affronting and putting him into a passion; but we must endeavor to promote virtue, and to edify him both by word and example. It is not enough to love him as long as fortune smiles upon him, when he is in a good-humor, or as long as he is a true friend; and to shut our doors on him when he begins to sink in the world and to take our leave of him when he is humorsome or disobliging. No, the love we have for our-

selves is not content with such cold, barren, interested, dissembling, idle, or unprofitable kindness. Therefore, upon this rule of loving our neighbor as ourselves, Christian charity obliges us to love him really, and to the purpose; to bear with the weakness of others as we would have them bear with ours; to assist another in his affairs, as we should be glad to be assisted in ours; to comfort him in his troubles, afflictions, wants, sickness, and the like, as we should reasonably desire to be comforted and relieved, were we in the like circumstances. Thus we may run over all the states and conditions of human life: and in these, when we measure to others as we would have them measure to us, we shall give proof that we love them as ourselves, which, St. Paul says, is the fulfilling of the whole law.

But since this rule may be abused, as the best of principles too often are, and the love of ourselves may be excessive and vicious, as in many occasions it is; our Saviour was pleased to add a second direction, and obliges us to "love one another as he has loved us;" that is, to love one another in God, and for God, as he has loved us upon this account. The more our love increases, the more it is sanctified, and this it is that distinguishes a Christian's love from what is fond, profane, or sensual; when built upon this divine motive, it is raised from a moral virtue to a far greater perfection, and a larger extent, and becomes charity, extending itself to all in God, and for God. This love banishes all worldly and sensual friendship, whereby persons love one another to a crime; whereby they grant a mutual assistance, and are united in knavery, debauches, and all manner of evil commerce, such as is so far from having an eternal good for its end or its motive, that it tends to nothing but mutual ruin; so far from loving one another in God, and for God, that it is only to love themselves in the devil, and for damnation.

It banishes also all the coldness and indifference of worldly friendships, that are built only upon interest and conveniencies, which sink as soon as those fail. When your love has God for its

motive and its end, you will not say, why should I love this person, I have no dependence on him? Why should I be subject to his sullen and disagreeable humor, since I can live without him? Why should I oblige him in this or that? I am sure I shall never find my account in it, or I am sorry I did him such a kindness, since he so much abuses it. Why all this? Because God will have it so, because Christ has obliged us to love one another, as he has loved us; he has no ends to himself, no interest or advantage of his own, but ours, in all he did, and all he suffered. He loved us for God, with a generous and disinterested love for our good, and not his own; to make us, not himself, happy; to give us, and not to take any thing from us. "If you love them that love you," in whom you find your convenience, satisfaction, or interest, "what reward shall you have; (says Christ,) do not even the publicans this?" Matt. v. 46.

Again, be sure never to repine at the good you have done, though the receiver abuse both you and it. When the kindness you did your neighbor was for God's sake, it is not lost to you, though it be lost upon the receiver; he, upon whose account you gave it, will be your rewarder. He accepts it from you as kindly as if it were done to himself: "Whatsoever you do to these little ones, says Christ, you do it to me." As long as they occupy his place, and represent his person, you cannot be mistaken in your love, nor misplace your favors or good actions.

In fine, Christ has loved us with a great love, even to die for us, and none can have a greater charity than to give his life for his friend. I should not, dear Christians, require this of you, nor dare to extend this duty even to the giving your lives for one another, did not the apostle St. John (1 Ep. iii. 16.) expressly require it: so great and sincere ought our love to be to one another. We have known the love of God to us, says the apostle, in this, that he has given his life for us, and we also must give our lives for our brethren. Here is the model, the example, and the extent of our love; and indeed it is but fit that Christ

should dispose of our lives for the good of his members, who has given his for us. But, to avoid mistake, you must know we are not bound to hazard our own soul to save our neighbors, nor venture our lives to save his; nor to part with our goods to enrich him; for this would be to love him better than ourselves: but we are obliged to venture our temporal life to save his soul. and to hazard our goods to save his life; for this is doing as we reasonably desire to be done by, and loving our neighbor as ourselves, and as Christ has loved us.

The third pattern assigned us for our mutual affection one to another, is that love which the members of the same body bear to one another. This we should imitate in six things: First—Though the members of the same body, as the eye, the hands, the feet, &c. have neither the same honor nor employment, yet they never envy one another, but are entirely content with their condition, willingly doing each their respective duty. Alas! if all the body was eye, where would the hearing be? If all was hearing, where would be the smelling, &c.? What would the head do without the hands and feet, or they without the head? What could the rich do without the poor to work and labor for them? And if all were poor, who would employ them, or pay them? The rich want the poor, and the poor the rich; each therefore ought to be content with their condition God has assigned them, love and assist one another. The rich ought not to contemn or neglect the poor, nor the poor envy the rich.

Secondly. When one member is hurt by another, it never revenges itself; so we ought to bear injuries, and never return evil for evil, but to conquer evil by good, as the apostle advises, and requires at our hands.

Thirdly. There is never a member that appropriates his office to itself, but serves the rest, as occasion requires; the eye is the eye to all the body, and so of the rest; we are not born for ourselves, but for the good of the whole, each in their respective capacity; some to instruct, some to labor, some to contrive, and

some to execute. "Though we are many, says St. Paul, yet we are all one body in Christ, and each members to one another."

Fourthly. What honor or kindness is due to one, it is acknowledged and received by all; so we ought to rejoice in one another's good, as if it were our own. Thus Christ, who is our head, says "what you do to one of these little ones, you do to me."

Fifthly. One member defends and protects another in all danger. The head is threatened, and the eye discovers the danger, the hand is raised to prevent it, or the feet to run to escape it. Thus we ought to be solicitous, and ready to discover the evil that may fall upon another, and to be a mutual defence.

Lastly. When any part is hurt, all the rest are truly concerned, and ready to bring relief. The foot happens to tread upon a thorn, what is more remote from eye than the feet? They are far off indeed in situation, but nearer in affection; wherefore immediately they look to find it out, the tongue asks where it is, and the hands are busy to pull it out; yet the hands, tongue, and eyes ail nothing, and the foot is only hurt; yet they all are in pain for one another, and by compassion feel the smart the other suffers. When we come thus to compassionate, assist, and relieve one another, Christian charity will dwell in our hearts, and we shall be true members of that head, that lived and died for us.

You see, dear Christians, the motives which oblige us to love one another, and the patterns left us in the word of God, and the example of Christ, which we ought to imitate. The fairer our copy, the nearer we come to the original, the better proof we shall give that we are his disciples, who not only gave his life for love of us, but will also crown our love with eternal life.

DISCOURSE VIII.

ON THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.—Exod. xx. 13.

I HAVE explained unto you, dear Christians, many important duties that are included in, or have relation to the fifth commandment, as also many sins that are forbidden by it. Now, the root and occasion of all, or most of the injuries offered to our neighbor is, anger, when it is not ruled and governed by reason: fighting, quarrelling, murder, calumny, detraction, rash judgment, unjust suspicions, &c., generally proceed from anger; this does not only foment evil in the heart, but frequently breaks out into many injuries, both in words and actions. Did we, therefore, overcome, or govern this passion, we might prevent much wickedness.

Now, what is anger? It is an unjust, or an inordinate desire to be revenged of, or to punish those from whom we have, or think we have, received an injury. Anger of its own nature, is not evil, and only then becomes evil, when it is contrary to justice, order, or reason; so when anger punishes, or desires to punish and correct those who deserve punishment and correction, it is not blameable, if it exceeds not just bounds: but it is always a sin when we desire to be revenged of, or punish those who deserve it not, for that is contrary to reason; or to punish more than the fault deserves, for that is contrary to justice; or to punish those who are not under our charge, over whom we have no superiority, for this is contrary to law, and the order of justice; or if they punish only to satisfy their own passion, without having for their end the preservation of justice, or the amendment of those whom their anger corrects.

Certainly, to be angry at the fault committed, if our anger exceeds not the just bounds of reason, is so far from being a sin,

that it is a virtue, and called zeal: and therefore, St. Gregory the Great, in his fifth book of Morals, tells us, (chap. xxxi.) that the anger which zeal for justice excites in us, is much different from that which impatience provokes us to: the one is the effect of virtue, and the other of vice. If some anger did not proceed from virtue, zealous Phineas, by his sword, had never appeased the anger of God. This anger, because Heli wanted it against his wicked children, provoked the implacable anger of God against himself and them; his coldness in punishing his two wicked sons, inflamed the anger of the Almighty against all three, and drew a severe punishment upon them, an untimely and an unprovided death. His two sons were killed in their sins, and he upon hearing the news, fell from his chair, and broke his neck. "Be ye angry, and sin not," (Psalm iv. and ad Eph. iv.) which is misunderstood by those who say, we must be angry only at our own faults, and not at those of our neighbor; because if we are obliged to love our neighbor as ourselves, we ought to be angry at his, as well as our own faults; so that it is upon this account that Solomon says, (Eccl. vii. 4.) "that anger is better than laughter, because by the sadness of the countenance the mind of the offender is corrected."

Where anger therefore exceeds not the bounds of reason, it is so far from being an offence to God, that the want of it highly provokes him; so those who through want of zeal for justice, for God's honor, and their neighbor's good, pass by many faults without due correction and reprehension, are very blameable in the sight of God. Thus, fond parents, careless masters, and such as have others under their care, who pass by faults in silence, and shew not anger when they have reason to be angry, draw the more severe anger of God upon themselves, and may justly expect the punishment of Heli upon them and theirs.

Certainly, if we could never be angry without offending God, if this passion was always vicious, to what purpose should the royal prophet give us this caution in one of his psalms, (iv. 5.)

"Be ye angry, and sin not." There is an anger which is certainly blameable, and there is an anger which is reasonable and holy: such was the anger of Phineas, who not being able to behold the scandalous sin of impurity, of a Jew with a Madionite, killed them both on the spot; such was the zeal of Moses, when upon the people's adoring the golden calf in contempt of the living God, he killed twenty-five thousand in punishment of this crime; such was the zeal of Elias against the priests of Baal; and such was the zeal of our Saviour Christ, when he overturned the chairs of the traders in the temple, and made a whip of cords to chase those out of it, who made the house of prayer a place of trade. As long as anger is governed by reason, justice, and order, it is certainly commendable, but when it exceeds these bounds, as it frequently does, it is always evil, and a greater or less sin, according to the circumstances that attend it.

"Whensoever (says St. Basil, Hom. xx.) anger gets the master of reason, and governs that instead of being governed by it, it turns a man into a brute, and the most ungovernable of brutes: there is no wild beast carried with more violence in what they do than they are; and what poison is to venomous creatures, fury supplies in those who are passionately angry; their words bite like serpents, and sting like scorpions, and always leave poison behind them; they foam like mad dogs, and their actions are not unlike unto them." So the scripture calls them by their names: "I have been beset by a company of dogs," says David, in the person of our Saviour; and in another place, "they have sharpened their tongues like serpents, (says he,) and the poison of asps lie under their lips." Yes, dear Christians, an unbridled tongue, fiery eyes, ungovernable hands, contumelious reproaches, accusations, quarrelling, fighting, and innumerable such like, are the fruits of anger; it is this passion sharpens the tongues of women to abuse, and the swords of men to butcher one another; this extinguishes all compassion, respect, and duty; brothers know not brothers, parents their children, nor children their parents;

like a fierce torrent that has broke its banks, they overrun all, sparing none that come in their way; neither the veneration due to age, dignity, or worth, can stop their fury; nor respect to kindred, gratitude to benefactors, no obligations whatever can work upon them; even their own interest has no power with them; for many times in the heat of this passion, they say and do many things that turn to their own prejudice, and of which they are thoroughly sensible as soon as they are cool.

It is true, at this time they have reason, but it is drunk with passion, and they have no use of it; they have reason, but it is now no more a master, but a slave to anger; they have reason, but it serves them only to increase their malice, to imbitter their words, and render them more severe upon their neighbor, and in the end more prejudicial to their own souls.

Now, you must first observe, that anger when it is joined with the desire, or will of an unjust revenge, such as if put in execution, would be an unjust and a considerable damage, or prejudice to our neighbor, is always a mortal sin; and the reason is evident, because in this it is opposite both to charity and justice; and the words of our Saviour sufficiently prove it. "You have heard, (says he, Matt. v. 21, 22.) that it was said to them of old, thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say to you, that whosoever shall be angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, *Raca*, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell's fire."

In the first degree, is anger with a design or desire of considerable revenge, no ways expressed, but conceived only in the mind. And this, no doubt, is a mortal sin; and, as our Saviour says, deserves to be condemned by judgment. The second degree of anger is, when the revenge is not only conceived in the mind, but also in some manner expressed by some marks of indignation, as this word *Raca* signifies nothing in particular, but is only a

mark of indignation; so whosoever shall say to his brother *Raca*, shall deserve to be condemned by council; that is, whosoever discovers, by some exterior signs of indignation, the desire of revenge which he has in his heart, commits also a mortal sin. The third degree is, when the angry person takes the revenge in effect which he conceived in his heart; so whosoever shall say, thou fool, that is, whosoever shall give very abusive language to his brother, shall deserve to be condemned to the fire of hell. This is the explanation St. Gregory the Great, (L. 21. Mor. c. 4.) St. Augustin, and St. Thomas, (Aug. L. 2. Serm. in mon. c. 9.) give of this text.

However, if in anger a person desires only a small and trivial revenge, as children usually do, the sin is only venial: because the designed injury is but small.

Secondly. When we wish a known rogue hanged, or brought to public justice; this is no sin, if it be not done out of a private pique, but the desire of justice; because it is not an unjust punishment we desire, but what he really deserves according to law, and therefore no injury.

Thirdly. When one conceives a vehement anger in his mind, though in his heart he desires no revenge, yet if he breaks out into blasphemous expressions against God, or very injurious words against his neighbor, that anger is a mortal sin; because it makes him fall into such injurious words as are mortal sins.

Fourthly. Indignation, which is a daughter of anger, if it be accompanied with a great contempt of our neighbor, or gives great scandal to the weak, is a mortal sin. Indignation is not ordinarily expressed in words, but appears most commonly in the countenance or behavior, and usually suppresses glowing anger in the breast; but the more says St. Gregory, it is kept from appearing outwardly, the more it burns within: as words give vent to the passion, and lesson it, so the silence indignation causes, swells and increases it; and when this amounts to a great contempt of our neighbor, that we scorn to speak to him, it be-

comes a great sin, destroys charity, and occasions hatred, thus by degrees, a mote in the angry man's eye grows up into a beam of hatred. A disturbed mind, that keeps all to itself, is continually working, and finding out new reasons and causes to increase its distemper, and, like a viperous brood, they ruin the mind that gave them birth.

Fifthly. When anger proceeds into deliberate curses, and evil wishes against our neighbor, or to God's creatures, it cannot be excused from a mortal sin. In cold blood, people of any conscience seldom wish any mischief to others from their hearts, but in their passion often. Persons of a quarrelsome temper sometimes vent their passion in blows, and as they do much, so they say little, and seldom seek revenge by words, when they have it in actions. But such as are of another temper, and not so forward with their hands, seek to revenge themselves by their tongue, spend their anger in imprecations, and beg of God to inflict those punishments upon them, which they cannot, or dare not do themselves.

Sixthly. When anger discharges itself in sharp reproaches, contumelious words, slander, and the like injurious expressions, by which they endeavor to dishonor and disgrace, or exasperate their neighbor, it is always a grievous sin, and such, as St. Paul says, (Gal. v. 20, 21.) excludes from the kingdom of heaven. And this is evident also from what our Lord says in St. Matthew, (chap. v. 22.) "He that calls his brother fool," that is, he that gives him reproachful language, "shall be in danger of hell fire."

However, if the reproach be small, and does neither disgrace, nor much trouble to those to whom it is spoke, the sin is only venial, or no sin at all, if they be persons under our care, whom we hope, by a moderate reproach, to make sensible of their fault, and awake them to their duty. Thus St. Paul, writing to the Galatians, calls them senseless people: "O senseless Galatians, (says he, v. iii. 1.) who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?" And thus our Saviour reproaches his apostles;

"O foolish (says he, Luc. xxiv. 25.) and slow of heart, to believe all things which the prophets have spoken." Charity, no doubt, has its sting, as well as passion, but for a very different end; the one aims to heal, and the other to make a wound; the one to reclaim us from evil, and to spur us on to virtue, the other to exasperate and provoke us to evil.

Seventhly. When anger proceeds to quarrelling and fighting, the unjust aggressor cannot be excused from mortal sin; unless in children, whose anger is not great, and malice less. Quarrelling, when it proceeds to blows, is a kind of private war, begun by anger, and carried on with a design, if not to kill, at least very much to hurt one another. In the person that sets up upon the other, it cannot be without the breach of charity; but in the person that is set upon, it may, if he exceeds not the bounds of a just defence and moderation; because it is lawful to defend ourselves against any unjust aggressor, provided our defence be accompanied with such a moderation, as shews we design not a mischief to our adversary, but to disable him from doing us one. This is understood when we are set upon by such as design to kill, wound, or do us a mischief; to take away our goods, or unjustly secure our persons; for it is never lawful to challenge another to fight upon a provocation, nor to fight when provoked and challenged, because this is directly contrary to the duty of a Christian, whose obligation it is to bear injuries with patience, and not to return evil for evil, but good for evil: "Bless them that curse you, (says Christ, Matt. v.) and pray for them that persecute you. You have heard, (says our Saviour,) that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, not to resist evil, but if one strike thee on the right cheek, turn to him also the other." This is what patience and Christian charity require of us, at least in the disposition of our hearts. It is true, we may demand justice for injuries and abuses received, but never revenge; from whence it is evident, fighting

upon a provocation cannot, on either side, be excused from a great sin.

You see, dear Christians, into what a number of sins anger leads passionate people; so that it is not without great reason that Solomon says, (Prov. xxix. 22.) "A passionate man provoketh quarrels, and he that is easily stirred up to wrath, shall be more prone to sin." Besides, it is a great uneasiness that is caused in their own breast, and also in others, who are the object of their passion; it disorders their peace of mind, disturbs their prayers, and makes them unfit for all Christian duties, even when it is in a moderate degree. But when it flies out into desires of revenge, cursing, swearing, and blaspheming God; when it expresses itself in reproaches, railing, and slander, what havoc does it not make in a soul, what dissensions, what animosities, and what quarrels does it not cause? It is a blind, unruly, and turbulent passion, that first darkens the light of reason God has given us for our guide, and then usurps its authority; so no wonder such extravagancies proceed from such an usurpation. And, indeed, what can be expected better? For it is a passion that is always blind, and therefore can never judge of anything aright; it takes things by halves, misunderstands, and misrepresents them. It is unjust, and therefore to be sure it will be more or less in the wrong; it is unreasonable, and therefore it cannot be relied on, or trusted in what it says; it is rash, and therefore likely to say or do many foolish, indiscreet, or extravagant things, of which they must repent afterwards. Alas! look upon the ruins of the fairest town and countries; it was anger destroyed these. Behold unpeopled cities, and desert land, that once flourished in peace and plenty; it was anger laid them waste. Behold the animosities, dissensions, quarrels among families, as well as private persons, it was anger caused them. Consider the oaths, curses, blasphemies, detractions, reproaches, and innumerable sins of the tongue, it is anger gives them birth. What shall I say of the many duels, murders, and mischiefs that hap-

in the world? Is not anger at the bottom of all? Is it not anger begins, continues, and completes them?

Besides, anger is the great bane and poison of conversation, and makes that part of our lives uneasy and disturbed, which should be the comfort and amusement of our mind, to fit us for greater duties. So the Holy Ghost tells us, (Prov. xxi 19.) "It is better to dwell in a wilderness, than with a quarrelsome passionate woman; it is better to sit in a corner of the house top, than with her in a common house." And again, (Ibid. xxii. 24.) "Be not a friend to angry man, and do not walk with a furious man; but perhaps thou learn his ways, and take scandal to thy soul." And again, in the 20th chapter, "As coals to burning coals, and wood to fire, so an angry man raiseth quarrels."

Consider then what desolations, what ruins, what mischiefs, what sins, what troubles and disquiets proceed from anger; how careful ought we then to be to give no admittance in our hearts to so unreasonable and so turbulent a guest, which is always doing mischief, or at best making others or ourselves uneasy, or perhaps both?

However, there is great difference in the disposition and temper of persons subject to this vice. There are some that are soon angry, and soon appeased; like flax that is soon fired, and soon reduced into cold ashes. Others are hardly moved to passion, but when once thoroughly incensed, they are not easily pacified; like hard and solid wood, that is not easily set on fire, but when once well kindled, it burns a long time. These, no doubt, are more criminal than the former, and give testimony of a worse nature, and less grace, and betray in themselves more of Adam, and less of the spirit of the gospel. Again, there are some that are soon fired; an accidental word or action, which, blown by suspicion, soon flames in their hearts, and, though they stifle it as much as they can, and keep it from appearing to the world, yet it boils in their breast, and continues the longer by being kept from taking air; it is not much unlike to coal under ground, when,

by accident set on fire, it smothers and burns a long time, and is seldom put out. Others set a greater value upon a calm and peace of mind, and look upon it, as it really is, the most precious of all jewels, so seldom yield to anger; and if, at any time, they are surprised by passion, they quiet themselves as soon as they can; like those who unwillingly receive a troublesome guest, and are glad to get rid of him as soon as possible. Those certainly are less blameable; for as this passion takes no root in their hearts, it occasions but small disturbance in their souls. As what relates to the remedies against this vice, and the ill effects of it, I shall propose in the following discourse.

At present, you see, dear Christians, the danger and grievousness of this spreading evil, and into what a variety of sins it branches. Those, whose natural constitution inclines them to any excess in this kind, ought to be extremely upon their guard to give no admittance to an enemy that will plunder them of all their peace of mind, and engage them in endless storms. The long experience they have had of the mischiefs, one would think, should make them daily double their guards to prevent their surprise. But if they have had the misfortune to have been overcome, and thereby have been injurious to their neighbor, they ought, as soon as possible, ask forgiveness of those they have injured, and endeavor to make a sincere reconciliation; for anger, like drink, when kept long in the vessels, sours into hatred. This is the command our Saviour leaves us in the gospel, "If thou, therefore, offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift." (Matt. v. 23, 24.) This is the means to be reconciled to God, as well as our neighbor, and to have peace with both; and as it carries with it no small difficulty, we may expect a great blessing from it; peace here, and glory hereafter.

DISCOURSE IX.

ON THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.—Exod. xx. 13.

I HAVE shewn you, dear Christians, in the foregoing discourse, the many evils that proceed from the imperious, hasty, and turbulent passion of anger. This is a vicious root that branches into almost all manner of evil, malice, envy, hatred, with all their brood, are so many shoots that rise from this vicious stock; murders, quarrels, dissensions, fightings, &c. spring from hence; slander, backbiting, contempt, open reproaches, and secret detraction, with endless animosities, public threats, and private grudges, have no other beginnings. Nor can cursing, swearing, blaspheming, with innumerable sins of the tongue, be assigned to any other cause, there being always anger at the bottom.

Since, therefore, this passion leads us into so much evil, and so many ways endangers our souls, we have reason to use all means to prevent it. The first remedy is to consider, that our Saviour declares, those to be blessed, who are meek, and that, in regard and reward of this virtue, they shall possess the land of the living, that is, the kingdom of heaven. Their condition then must be quite different who are fiery and passionate, and take no care to master and moderate this unhappy temper. But not to mistake the words of our Saviour, it is not those he calls blessed who are by nature and constitution meek, but who are so by virtue and grace; for God never rewards the works of nature with the kingdom of heaven, but only those of grace; not what is our temper, but what is our choice: not what we cannot hinder, but what we labor to gain. This meekness is a participation of the divine nature; some small sprinkling from that infinite fulness of God, which moves us for his sake to be mild and meek to all persons, at all times, and in all circumstances; not because this is our in-

clination, but because it is the will of God we should be so. If our meekness be not uniform, constant, and in regard to all, it is a mark that it proceeds from some human motive, and not from God; from some natural respect we have for those above us, from a civility commendable in conversation amongst equals, or from some private ends we have at such or such a time. This is not what our Saviour recommends to us, when he bids us learn of him, because he is meek and humble of heart; he was meek to all, in all provocations, and to all persons, even his worst enemies. Why? Because he was humble of heart. As anger and passion are too often rooted in pride, so true meekness is grounded upon a real humility of heart. Where there is much passion and anger, there is usually much pride: where there is much patience and meekness, there generally is a great humility in the heart: virtues so agreeable to Almighty God, that the scripture takes notice, that those were most conversant with Almighty God, who were most meek, and particularly Moses and David; of the former it is said, that he was the meekest of all men that were upon the earth; of the latter the hundred and thirty-first psalm says, "O Lord, remember David, and all his meekness," as being the greatest motive to engage Almighty God to be merciful to him. Moses was a man of courage and resolution; and David of a stout and warlike spirit; and yet both mild and meek; because the spirit of God was in them, which over-ruled their passion, and brought them to a great temper in all they said and did. What is the spirit of God? It is the spirit of meekness and patience; it is the spirit of peace, and not of contention. Hence, in the scripture, he is called the Prince of Peace; and in the book of Wisdom "Thou, O Lord," says Solomon, "judgest in tranquillity." And upon whom shall I look, says Almighty God, but upon the little one, the contrite of heart, and him that trembles at my words? And thus you know, as the gospel relates, the spirit rested upon him at his baptism in the shape of a dove, to shew that his heart was without gall or bitterness. We

cannot share then in the spirit of God without sharing in his meekness and patience; for as St. Paul doubts not to say, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. viii. 9.) This, no doubt is a great motive to raise in us a great esteem of this virtue, so dear to God; and a horror of the contrary vice, which, if it be not raised is almost inflamed by the devil, whose spirit is the spirit of anger, contention, and animosity; the spirit of ill-will, dissensions, and quarrels.

A second motive to overcome this vice, is the inconvenience it brings to ourselves, by robbing us of all peace and quiet of mind which is the most precious jewel we have; without it we can do nothing well, and with it we can scarce do anything amiss. All things go smooth and even with us, when we enjoy a calm in our own breasts; we are cheerful in our business, and recollected in our prayer; we are pleased with our duty, and discharge it with ease. But if anger once enters into our hearts, it disturbs and ruffles all, as it destroys our peace; it takes away all our content it makes us uneasy with ourselves and others, and renders the service of God a heap of distraction, instead of prayer; so that as our Saviour says, "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves." Matt. xxi. 13.

Besides, there are none happy, or unhappy in this world, but because their hearts are in peace, or in trouble; and this is so true, that if in storms and tempests we could preserve a calm in our souls, we should, like the martyrs, be content in the midst of torments, and be happy in the midst of disgrace. On the contrary, we should be miserable in the enjoyment of the greatest prosperity or success, if we have not peace in our hearts. It is this makes the poor man cheerful in his cottage; and the want of this makes even kings sit with heavy hearts upon their thrones; so true it is, that of all the good and evil this life affords, there is nothing that rejoices or afflicts us, but as it brings peace or trouble to our souls; and therefore St. Paul earnestly wishes this great blessing to the Philippians, "May the peace of God,"

says he, "which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." Phil. iv. 7.

We ought certainly then to labor in procuring and preserving this peace as much as possible, and never to let our own passionate temper deprive us of it, nor the uneasy and contentious humors of others banish it from our souls; let us remain like a rock unmoved amidst storms and tempests, and keep peace with those that will be in a storm. Thus holy David did: "I was peaceful,' says he, "with those that hated me."

There are many other remedies against this vice, and are different according to the different passions from whence it proceeds Anger sometimes proceeds from pride, sometimes from envy, and sometimes from a passionate temper. When anger proceeds from pride, it is usually very violent: the one passion increasing the other, pride swells anger, and anger inflames pride. That fiery disposition is much augmented, when we apprehend that the vain esteem we have of ourselves, is any ways lessened by what is said or done. So upon the apprehension of a contempt, a neglect, or some slighting expression, pride blows the coals and sets all on a flame; it burns not only in the mind and in the heart, but it appears in the countenance, flames out at the eyes, and discovers itself in some extravagant words or behavior. Thus mutually increasing one and the other, they contribute to the greater ruin of the soul. Anger to pride, is as fire is to water; it makes it boil up and run over. And pride to anger, is as wind to burning coals; soon blowing it into a flame.

How happens it, dear Christians, you are so soon put into a passion? How comes it you are so sensible of an injury? What is the reason you will bear nothing? Is it not pride? Is it not because you imagine that you are above them, or at least their equals; and therefore will suffer nothing from them, but give them as good as they bring? If you are rich, pride immediately opposes your wealth to their mean fortune, and cries, see that pitiful fellow, that contemptible hussy, to say so and so of me!

If you have birth and quality, you expect all should submit to, and respect you on all occasions. What were they but the other day? we know whence they came, and how they have risen. If you have parts and qualifications, that have raised you, you immediately set them against the ignorance and wants of others. Pitiful creatures! what do they know, or what can they do? Thus pride, in an hundred such occasions, blows the coals of anger, and sets it into a flame, proportionable to the contempt or injury which they imagine they have received.

Now, as such anger is rooted in pride, the only remedy against it is humility; be but truly humble and you will easily moderate this passion; be but truly humble and you will suffer reproaches with patience, if not with content. Regard not yourself because you are rich, because you have authority and power, because you are endowed with this or that qualification, or because you have this or that advantage over others. But if you will value yourself, do it upon a real and solid title; value yourself because you are a Christian, bearing his name, who bids you "learn of him, because he is meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls." Matt. xi. 25.

Power, wealth, beauty, honor, knowledge, birth, &c., what are they in the judgment of God, when separated from humility? If they are of any value in his sight, it is by the contempt of them, or by the sacrifice we make of them to him who gave them to us. There is another sort of superiority more becoming a Christian, and which St. Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians recommends to all; "Suffer not any one," says he, "to outdo you in humility." (Phil. 2, 3.) Consider not how much you surpass them in worldly interest, but how far you outdo them in virtue; not how you outdo them in many natural qualifications, but how you are above them in humility, and Christian perfection: stand upon this punctilio as much as you please: "Let nothing be done," says the apostle, "through contention, neither by vain glory, but in humility, let each esteem others better than

themselves:" (Phil. ii. 3.) at least look upon none to be inferior to you. Weigh not your neighbor's faults in balance with your perfections, nor their wants with what you have; but compare your faults with their perfections, and what they have with what you have not, and you will easier bear with them, when you seem to be injured by them; for we can suffer more from those who are above us, than from such as we imagine to be below us. You are better to pass in the world, and it may be, they have more interest in heaven; you are more esteemed by men, and they more regarded by God. You have more wealth, and they have more virtue; you have received greater talents, and they have made use of the little God has bestowed on them; in a word, by humility, look upon none to be inferior to you. Thus you will give a just and reasonable check to your pride, and by that means easier calm that passion, which is built upon it.

Secondly. When anger is caused by impatience, as when upon a little miscarriage, an unlucky accident, untowardness of people, of cattle, or the like, a person flies into a passion, and from passion into cursing and swearing, or some other extravagance. The remedy for this is patience; for certainly the want of this virtue is the cause of that excess.

Our Saviour tells you in the gospel, "that in your patience you shall possess your souls;" (Luc. xxi. 19.) that is, by patience you shall enjoy yourselves, enjoy what you are. What are you? by nature, you are a reasonable creature, by grace you are a Christian, pious, moderate, and just. By anger we lose all this, and are stripped of what we are; but by patience we continue the possession: this virtue is as a guard to all the rest; for as long as we are masters and mistresses of ourselves, so long we enjoy what we are, so long we are reasonable creatures, so long we are pious, moderate, and just, so long we are Christians. But if anger once get the master, we are no more ourselves; it is not we, it is not reason, it is not virtue, it is not moderation, it is not Christianity, but anger that governs: we are at the

mercy of that hasty, inconsiderate, blind, and sinful passion, we give up ourselves; so it is not we, but anger possesses our souls. How unreasonable, and how unchristian like is this? God has made us rational creatures, and our Redeemer has purchased for us grace to govern and over-rule our passions, and we give up the cause, abandon virtue, and through this passion become injurious to God, injurious to our neighbor, and injurious to ourselves. For it is by patience, we resemble our God, who bears with sinners, who sees the innunerable crimes and abominations committed in the world against him, and even beholds those sins that are the effect of our ungoverned passion, and forbears a just revenge. By patience also you become sociable, agreeable to all company, and most effectually prevail upon and correct the contrary temper in your neighbor. By patience likewise you enjoy yourself, you continue master of your heart, and as our Saviour says, possess your souls.

There is a third occasion of anger, and it is when the passions of another falls upon you, either justly or unjustly; this, if you are not upon your guard, will make you guilty of the fault you observe and blame in another; for as fire enkindles fire, anger is apt to raise anger, and increase the storm which patience would have soon calmed. Here, therefore, this virtue is particularly necessary, that you may show yourself a Christian, and not an infidel; that you may give some proof that you are a child of God, and not of the devil, according to that of our Saviour Christ, "Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, that you may be the children of your Father, who is in heaven." Matt. v. 44.

Consider, in such occasions Almighty God makes trial of you, whether you will stand by him and do your duty, or you will go over and take part with your adversary, and become as blameable as he; returning again anger for anger, injury for injury, and reproach for reproach, thus justifying what you condemn by doing what he does.

Whereas by patience you would gain a double victory, a vic-

tory over your adversary, and a victory over yourself; both extremely grateful to your God. You gain an honorable victory over your adversary, and disappoint all his designs; for what does he aim at by all his injuries and reproaches, but only to provoke and vex you? If your patience set you above this, he loses his end, and is vexed because he cannot vex you: his wicked satisfaction is in your trouble; if your Christian temper prevents this, it all returns upon himself, and he becomes more uneasy, because he cannot make you so. When a dart is flung against a hard stone, it makes no impression, but flies in the face of him that cast it. If then, when they are angry, you are meek, when they are provoking, you are patient, when they are insolent, you are humble; all their darts fly in their own face, and gall their own hearts. For, certainly it is no small vexation to an evil mind, to see you so virtuous, whilst they are so wicked; to see you turn their poison into honey, and at the same time to ascend so many degrees towards heaven, as they descend steps towards hell, and deserve then as great a reward from God, as they are sure to have punishment.

You likewise gain a great victory over yourself in mastering that passion, which aims at nothing less than the mastering of you; you preserve a calm in your mind, peace in your heart, and possess your soul; and this is so agreeable to God, that you engage him thereby on your side; if you are injured, he will revenge it, and those another day shall smart who have done you wrong; if you suffer loss, he will repair it, if you endure pain, he will be your physician, or if death would follow he can raise you again to glory; what privilege, says Tertullian, (L. de pati. cap. 15.) has patience, thus to make God debtor! And no wonder, dear Christians, since by it we fulfil all his commands. Patience protects faith, supports hope, and assists charity. It preserves peace, strengthens humility, expects and completes repentance; it rules the passions of the body, and supports the weakness of the spirit; it bridles the tongue, and restrains the

and; it masters temptations, and prevents scandals; it comforts the poor man, and moderates the rich; it recommends the servant to the master, and the master to the servant. It is an ornament to women, and a grace to men; it is loved in a child, commended in youth, and respected in riper years; in a word, it is becoming in all ranks, in all ages, and in all sexes.

On the contrary, how disagreeable is impatience, especially breaking out into injurious reproaches, reflections, and uncharitableness! how it ruins peace, and destroys charity! How hateful to God, and disagreeable to men! how it disturbs the minds of others as well as our own, and leaves all in a storm! And where is the Christian all this while? Where is the practice of that lesson of our Saviour, where he says, (Matt xi. 29.) "Learn of me, because I am meek," &c. Besides, dear Christians, consider these people's tongues are accustomed to nothing but filth, what is decent and becoming seldom comes out of their mouths; do not defile yourself as they do, but look upon yourself to be above a dunghill.

Thus you see, dear Christians, the remedies against anger, and a passion that causes so much mischief and wickedness. Humility and patience are virtues so necessary for Christians, that without them in some considerable degree, we deserve not the name we bear; so necessary, that of all the virtues our Saviour practised, these he most commended to us: "Learn of me, (says he, Matt. xi. 29.) because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls." There is no calm in our minds without them, no peace to our hearts, nor no rest to our souls without them; nor is there any peace abroad, any union, any charity, or any brotherly love without them; they are the very spirit of Christ, we cannot then be without them; for, as St. Paul says, (Rom. viii. 9.) "who has not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

The last and great remedy, is to endeavor in earnest to master this passion. The chief, if not the only reason why passionate

people never or seldom correct this vice, is because they do not heartily endeavor it; for there is no passion whatever but may be conquered by grace; and we find by daily experience, people master other vices, why then should we except this? St. Paul, no doubt, of his own nature, was of a hot and violent temper, which appeared evidently from his anger, and forward persecution at the stoning of St. Stephen to death; but after his call to christianity, he gave no more way to that turbulent passion, but of a ravenous wolf became a meek lamb. St. Hierome was of a rough and morose constitution, but he so tempered it with charity, patience, and humility, that he obtained an entire victory over himself. St. Francis of Sales is said to have been naturally a man of a great deal of fire and heat, and very passionate; but he so gained upon his constitution by virtue, that he became the meekest of men, which appears in all his writings, as it did in all his conversation when upon earth. And the same may be said of thousands of others. So that were but people really in earnest, they might become masters of themselves as these saints did. At least, when they find passion begins to rise in them, immediately to give it a check, and repress it before it gets too great a head: and if they gain no farther upon themselves, at least to smother their resentment, and to hold their tongue; thus though they fall far short of the gospel rule, which is to be meek and humble of heart, they will prevent and avoid the indiscreet and scandalous part of anger.

If you find much difficulty in this, and that your passion increases upon you, you must leave the company for a moment, and alone reason yourself out of pride, impatience, and want of submission to the will of God, which are the usual causes of anger and passion; have recourse to prayer, take some good book in your hand, and earnestly beg of God to lay the storm, and God will not be wanting to assist you.

This is so true, that I am convinced there are none much given to this passion, but such as do not in earnest, and from

their hearts endeavor to conquer it. And my reason is this: for these persons, how passionate soever, will govern their tongues when a person is near who overawes them, or from whom it is their interest to conceal their passion. Whence it is clear they can do it when they have a mind to it; and can they not do as much for God as for men, for their soul's sake as for worldly respects, for eternity as for interest? What will these be able then to answer, when the searcher of hearts comes to examine their slothful excuse, they would amend if they could; do you think, dear Christians, it will pass with him? How can you rest then with any content, under the frequent relapse into this sin, and the small amendment you find in yourself, when you know God is to be your judge? Endeavor, therefore, in earnest to master this passion, and gain the spirit of humility and meekness to which heaven is promised, "Blessed are the meek for they shall possess the land."

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.—Exod. xx. 14.

Having explained unto you, dear Christians, all those sins that are forbid by the fifth commandment, as also those Christian duties that are commanded by it, I proceed to instruct you in what relates to the sixth, and to explain to you what it commands and what it forbids.

First, then, what we are obliged to in compliance with this commandment, is purity of body and mind; because as it forbids all that is contrary to it, so it necessarily obliges us to this. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you should abstain from fornication; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor: not in the passions

of lust, like the gentiles that know not God: for God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto sanctification." (1 Thess. iv. 3, 7.) And the particular reason of this is, because we are Christians. For in our baptism, not only our souls, but our bodies become the temple of the Holy Ghost, wherein he resides and delights to reside; because in our baptism, not only our souls but our bodies, become the members of Jesus Christ; for by that sacrament we are admitted into his church, and made part of that mystical body, whereof he is the head.

These reasons oblige Christians, to a great purity of body and soul, and are earnestly pressed by the same apostle: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid." Again in the same place, "Know ye not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God? And you are not your own? for you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body." v. 19.

Infidels and pagans never heard of the true God, much less of Jesus Christ their Redeemer, and therefore were never sanctified by his grace, never honored by any of his sacraments; yet for their sins of uncleanness, being contrary to their reason, they were severely punished by Almighty God; witness the fire and brimstone rained down from heaven upon their guilty heads, and which laid the whole country in ashes; witness the waters in Noah's flood, that swept away almost all mankind, and buried them under the revenging waves; witness the many countries destroyed by fire and sword, by God's express order, and left as marks of his anger to neighboring nations, and future ages, for their caution; witness, in fine, the number of his remarkable judgments upon particular persons, families, and people, of which the scripture and other histories give us an account.

And yet their bodies were not the temples of the Holy Ghost, honored by his presence, and sanctified by his grace, which they

defiled. Their bodies were not the members of Jesus Christ, which they prostituted to uncleanness, for they were never regenerated by the waters of baptism; they were never incorporated into his church, nor made part of that mystical body, whereof he is the divine head. They were never honored by the presence of Christ in the eucharist, nor made sharers of those adorable mysteries by receiving him into their bodies and souls, that by delivering them up to impurity after such a sanctification, they might provoke the extraordinary wrath of God.

No, no! but Christians are all this. They are the living temples of the Holy Ghost; they are regenerated by the waters of baptism, and washed into the purity of angels; so free from all spot or blemish, that the Holy Ghost is pleased to dwell within them. What can be more detestable, therefore, than for these to pollute this holy place, and to expel the Holy Ghost from the sanctuary he has chosen, and all this for a brutish pleasure? They are the living members of Christ by baptism and confirmation; and by eucharist they become one with him, receiving into themselves his own body and blood. How unworthy a thing then for those to step down from all this honor, into so filthy a sin? How ungrateful to abuse their divine head, who kindly chose them for his mystical body, and so far to debase themselves, as from being members of Christ, to become members of infamy? In fine, they have been sanctified by the presence of the body and blood of Christ, in the adorable mysteries of the eucharist. What punishments then must those deserve, who have so little sense of this, as to prostitute all to an infamous passion?

By these arguments of the apostle, as you see, dear Christians, what very much aggravates this sin in Christians, so you cannot but observe what ties they have to a great purity of body and mind; to be so watchful over themselves, as to let no immodest thought sully the purity of their minds; so cautious as to suffer no indecent word to come out of their mouths, much less any filthy action to defile their souls, that the Holy Ghost may con-

tinue in the temple he has chosen, and Christ our head be honored in his members.

Besides, this virtue is extremely agreeable to Almighty God, it makes us, in some degree, approach towards his own purity, and very much resemble the angels in heaven, "who by their state are more happy, but not more pure; less capable of sin, but not more agreeable to God." Bernard, Ep. 42. This argument our Saviour seems to make use of, and to equal chaste souls with the angels. "In the resurrection they shall neither marry, nor be married, but shall be as the angels of God in heaven." Matt. xxii. 30.

It is of these St. John speaks in the Revelations: "I saw the lamb upon Mount Sion, and with him one hundred and forty-four thousand singing as it were a new song before the throne; and which none else could sing but these hundred and forty-four thousand, whom he had purchased from the earth. These are such as never were defiled by women, they are virgins who follow the lamb wherever he goes. These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the lamb; in their mouth there was found no lie, for they are without spot before the throne of God." Apoc. xiv.

There are some particular privileges of virginity: First—To be seated near the throne of God. Secondly—To sing, as it were, a new song, which no other can sing; that is, to have, besides the essential glory common to all the elect, in their respective degrees, a particular crown of virginity, which none who are not virgins shall wear. Thirdly—To be particularly redeemed from the earth, that is, from the slavery of concupiscence, and delivered from the dangers that attend a married and worldly state. Fourthly—To have, as it were, a privilege of access to God, and to follow the lamb wherever he goes. Fifthly—To be the first fruits of the lamb, as having consecrated all to God, both body and soul. Lastly—There is no lie in their mouth, nor deceit in their heart. They are not like the foolish virgins, seek-

ng only the glory of men; for they are without spot or blemish in the eyes of God.

It is certain, none are obliged for life to this state, but such as freely make it their choice; marriage being left to every one's liberty, and a commendable state. However, such must not imagine that every thing is then lawful that passion can suggest: for there is a conjugal chastity which belongs to the marriage bed, which consists in the due use of what is allowable, and for the ends for which it is allowed; all things contrary being very criminal, even between married persons.

A great purity then of body and mind, both as to the thoughts, words, and actions, is strictly commanded by this precept, and no allowance, I say, but in a married state, and during marriage, and then to keep within the bounds of decency and duty; that nothing be done contrary to the end for which it was instituted. This, I say, is commanded; let us then consider what is forbid.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. By this is understood all manner of carnal sin whatever; of these the scripture mentions several kinds, which may be reduced to five species: to wit, fornication, adultery, sacrilege, incest, and sins against nature. And even these may be accompanied with such circumstances, as may very much aggravate the crime, of which wicked persons may be guilty, and thereupon necessary to be mentioned in confession.

Fornication is a sin where both the man and the woman are single, unmarried, and at their own disposal, out of their parents' or tutors' care. This sin is great in the sight of God, and very infamous in the eyes of the world, bringing ruin to their souls and to their reputation: "All fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you," says St. Paul to the Christians of Ephesus, (chap. v. 3.) And in his epistle to the Galatians, (v. 19.) "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, &c., which I foretel you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things, shall not obtain the kingdom of God."

This sin is greater, if the virgin be under her parents' or tutors' care; for then there is also a violation of their right, and still very much augmented if she be forced to such wickedness. In this case the ravisher incurs the penalty of the law, which is death; and no more required to take away his life, than the oath of the woman thus injured. This crime is called a rape, and of a distinct species from fornication, as including a distinct malice and injury.

Secondly—Adultery is a sin where both or one of the parties are married. This is a much greater crime than fornication; for besides the sin of impurity, there is that of infidelity, the breach of that solemn promise made to one another at their marriage. Besides, herein may be often very great injustice, by imposing children upon a wrong father, and causing him to maintain and make a provision for such children as are none of his own, to the great injury of such as are. Job calls this sin a heinous fault, and a very great wickedness; "It is a fire devoureth even to destruction, and rooteth up all things that spring." (chap. xxxi. 12.) Though the infidelity and the injustice are equal in both, yet as St. Augustin observes, (L. 2. de Adul. Conj.) the sin is greater in the man than in the woman, and for several reasons. First, because as men, they are the heads and leaders, and ought to give good example, and to do nothing they may have cause to fear their wives should imitate. Secondly, because they are men, they ought more manfully to resist temptations, and conquer their passions. Thirdly, as men, their reason is strouger, and their judgment more solid; they ought, therefore, to be more sensible of the grievousness of the sin, and avoid it more cautiously. Fourthly, as men, they ought to be ashamed to be outdone in virtue by the weaker sex.

A third species of this sin is sacrilege, and so called, when one or both parties have made a vow of chastity, either solemnly or privately. A solemn vow is made only in profession of a religious state, and in receiving holy orders; a private vow of

chastity may be made either for life, by any single person whatever, and at any time after they have come to the use of reason; though it is very improper to make it without mature deliberation, and the advice of their director, or some very prudent and judicious person.

This sin consists in the abuse of what is sacred and devoted to God; by this vow the purity of their soul and body is consecrated to him, offering to him a sacrifice of the contrary passion. Now, those who after such an engagement are faithless to the promise they have made to God, abuse and defile what is sacred to him, and in this commit a great crime over and above that of impurity.

A fourth species is that of incest, which includes another kind of malice, and is committed between persons who are akin, within the fourth degree, that is within the fourth generation from the same father and mother; and the nearer the kindred, the greater the crime. This relation is occasioned either by birth or marriage. The first is called consanguinity, and the latter affinity, and the violation of the former the more heinous fault.

Yet, besides these, there is also a spiritual affinity contracted in the sacrament of baptism and confirmation, between the godfather and godmother of the child they answer for in either of these sacraments and its parents. Here, besides the sin of uncleanness, there is a violation of that modesty and respect which is due to relations; this is so engrafted in human nature, that the wickedness of the worst of men have not yet blotted it out of their hearts.

The last species, and what are most detestable, are sins against nature, so called, says St. Augustin, because by such wickedness human nature cannot be propagated. Of these there are several sorts, and some greater than others; as sins with themselves, with the same sex, sodomy, or bestiality. Though in these sins, I say, there are many degrees and circumstances which extremely aggravate, yet the least are detestable; because, besides the im-

purity, the very end of nature is prevented or perverted. As to the other wicked furies of lust, says Tertullian, (Lib. de pudic. cap. 5.) speaking of these sins, which pass beyond the bounds of nature, those that are guilty of them, we do not only exclude from the entrance into the church porch, but from all that belongs to it, because they are not properly crimes, but monsters. And St. Thomas observes, as the order of right reason is from man, so the order of nature is from God; and therefore in sins against nature, a great injury is done to God, the orderer of nature.

These are also in the scripture called crying sins, sins that call aloud for the revenging hand of God, according to what we find written in the book of Genesis: (c. xviii.) "The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah," says Almighty God, "is multiplied, and their sin is become exceedingly grievous." And therefore our Lord rained brimstone and fire from out of heaven, and he destroyed those cities, and all the country about, with the inhabitants of the cities, and all things that spring from the earth.

Besides all these, there are other grievous crimes: as seeing immodest objects, doing or suffering immodest actions, such as of their own nature are wicked, or tend to wickedness; as also lascivious and unchaste kisses. These crimes are evidently condemned by the apostle in many places, and particularly in his epistle to the Ephesians, where he assures us, that they are sufficient to exclude the authors from the kingdom of heaven. "Fornication," says he, "and all uncleanness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints; or obscenity, or foolish talking, or scurrility. For understanding, know ye, that no fornicator, or unclean or covetous person, hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words, (says he,) for because of these things cometh the anger of God upon the children of unbelief." (chap. v.) Add to these, rude and obscene discourse, the reading or hearing immodest books, unchaste songs, &c. for pleasure, or with the danger of it in themselves to others.

These are the most effectual means which the devil has invented to corrupt the minds of men, to make them familiar with wickedness, and to instil poison into innocent souls. Ignorance, no doubt, is the preservative against wickedness, and the best guard of innocence. I am persuaded there are but few of that vast number, who lie in the flames of hell for this sin, and must for ever lie, but may trace the first steps to their ruin from ill-books, rude songs, or immodest discourse: these bring them into familiarity with vice, and by degrees poison the mind and corrupt the heart, and the next step is ruin. Nay, the apostle St. Paul assures us of the same truth, in his first epistle to the Christians of Corinth: "Be not seduced, evil discourse corrupts good manners."

Alas! what terrible account have those to give who have drawn others into this sin by their discourse or corrupt manners? What will they be able to answer for the many souls they have sent to hell? I say many souls, for certainly immodest discourse is a contagious evil; it is frequently in the mouth of wicked Christians, and is heard often and by many; and though all do not take the infection, yet there are abundance who do, the perdition of whose souls will be charged upon their heads at the great tribunal of God.

You see, dear Christians, what this commandment obliges you to, the great purity of body and mind it requires of you, as being the members of Jesus Christ, and the temples of the Holy Ghost; you see also what it forbids, how great the sins, and into what a variety of different species or kinds of sins it branches; and as they include a distinct malice, and a different sin from that impurity, it ought to be distinctly specified in confession. I hope therefore that the greatness of the sin may raise a horror and detestation of it in your hearts; that those who have been so wicked as to defile the temple of the Holy Ghost, and prostitute the members of Jesus Christ, banishing those divine persons from their souls, and preferring a filthy pleasure before them

both, may seriously repent, purify their hearts, and endeavor to retrieve their great loss. And that such as have hitherto preserved their innocence may be sensible of their happiness in being the living members of Jesus Christ, and the temples of the Holy Ghost, what greater blessing can they have on earth, and what surer pledge of heaven?

DISCOURSE II.

ON THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.—Exod. xx. 14.

HAVING shewed you, dear Christians, what you are obliged to by this precept, and what you are forbid, and how great this sin is in Christians, who thereby defile the temple of the Holy Ghost, and dishonor the members of Jesus Christ, I shall proceed to shew you the enormity of this vice, by the punishments God has and does inflict upon it in this life.

We reasonably judge of the greatness of a fault by the greatness of the punishment, when the judge who inflicts it is just and impartial. To punish a fault more than it deserves, is always injustice, and is usually the effect of some disorderly passion, the weakness of man. But when God punishes, who is the fountain of justice, and in whom there can be no imperfection, we must conclude from the severity of his judgments, the grievousness of the fault he punishes.

I shall only relate some of those punishments, which the justice of God has inflicted upon such as have been guilty of the sin of impurity, to revenge this crime upon them, and to be a terror to future ages.

The first remarkable punishment we find in scripture, is that of the deluge, wherein Almighty God drowned the whole world about 1650 years after the creation, and buried under the waters

all mankind, with all the birds and beasts upon the earth, excepting only four men and four women, who were innocent, and reserved for the repeopling of a better world, and some few of the birds of the air and the beasts of the land, to preserve the species. These were secured from the devouring waves, in the ark or ship, which Noah was ordered to build; all the rest of the world perished in the water, which overspread the whole face of the earth. The sea overswelled its banks, and came roaring in upon the land; the floodgates of heaven were also opened upon their heads, and the rain poured down for forty days and forty nights without intermission, and covered the highest mountains as well as the tallest trees. Thus perished all mankind, once the favorites of heaven, made to the image of God, and made for a noble end, to serve him on earth, and to enjoy him in heaven; to share in, and to be happy by the same happiness whereby he himself is infinitely happy.

What caused this change? What drew this heavy and universal judgment upon them? It was their sins, and particularly the sins of impurity: "For all flesh," says the sacred text, "had corrupted its way upon the earth;" (Gen. vi. 12.) and God seeing that the thoughts of their hearts were bent upon evil, and being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart; I will destroy man, (says he,) with the birds and beasts, it repenteth me that I have made him and them.

It is with great difficulty that Almighty God is brought to these extremities; it is our repeated crimes that force him to it; for he "desires not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; and why will you die, O house of Israel?" says he, by the prophet Ezechias, xxxiii. 11.

He had used means to reclaim them, but all in vain. Noah had preached to them for an hundred years together, but to little purpose. He admonished them of their crying sins, and the impending judgments of God, but they slighted both. And this is but too commonly the unhappy case of those who are given to

the sins of impurity—they are hardly reclaimed either by advice or threats; they run on in their evil ways, without duly considering the greatness of the offence to Almighty God, or their own imminent danger; and this till the just judgment of God surprise their neglect, and bury them in greater floods of wo.

One would think this general and severe punishment should have been a warning to the small remains of the world, who were saved in the ark, and that they should have left such impressions of it in their posterity, as never again to dare to provoke the Almighty by such wickedness. But alas! all this water was not enough to entinguish the fire of lust; for as the world increased in number, it increased again in wickedness, and in a little time they attempted the raising of the tower of Babel, which they designed should reach heaven. For the punishing of this insolence, Almighty God was contented to change their language, and disperse them over the earth; but this was soon followed by a more hateful crime, which called for a more remarkable punishment: the impurities of Sodom and Gomorrah grew great, and the cry of their sins grew loud, so that the God of purity, not able any longer to bear with these provoking crimes, resolved upon a more frightful judgment than that of the flood, to strike a greater terror into the minds of men, and give them a more lively sense of the greatness of the offence. He once drowned the world with floods of water from heaven, but now he pours down upon them floods of fire and brimstone, and in a moment reduces into ashes all the inhabitants of the towns and country, sending them flaming down to a greater fire below; with them perished all the buildings, and whatever grew upon the ground. The place remains to this day a filthy lake, called the Dead Sea, so noisome that nothing can live in it. This, no doubt, is left to all posterity as a standing monument of God's great aversion to this sin of uncleanness, as is declared in the Book of Wisdom, c. x. 7. "Whose land for a testimony of their wickedness is desolate, and smoketh to this day."

When Almighty God, whose nature is goodness, and who has that love for man, as to have made all things in this visible world for him, and man for himself, chastises him in this severe manner, both temporally and eternally; we may be sure the provocation is great; we may be sure the sins that drew down these heavy judgments upon their heads, were heinous in his sight; yes, dear Christians, and they were sins of impurity, as the sacred text expressly mentions; no doubt they were guilty of many other crimes, but these being the blackest, darkened the others, and the most enormous called loudest for vengeance.

Had there been any hopes that these people would have been reclaimed, and like the Ninevites, returned to God upon the preaching of a Jonas, they had never been the dreadful victims of God's wrath at that time, nor the terrible mark of his vengeance to future ages; but they were bent on evil, and increased it daily, and laughed at the warning which Lot gave them, as others before ridiculed the preaching of Noah: or had there been but a small number of just, to have appeased the anger of God, Sodom might have stood to this day; for before he destroyed this infamous place, he acquainted Abraham with his design. "I am resolved, (says he, Gen. viii.) to destroy Sodom, this wicked town, that has completed the number of its sins." Lord, says Abraham, is there no means to appease your anger? You are too just to involve the righteous in the same ruin with the wicked; if there be but fifty just persons in the whole town, will not you spare the rest upon their account? Yes, says Almighty God, if there be but thirty, if there be but twenty, or if there be but ten just persons amongst them, I will spare the whole city for their sakes; but that number not being found, Lot and his little family were ordered to leave it. Then showers of fire and brimstone were poured down upon them from heaven, and in a moment set them all on flame.

What we read in the book of Numbers is not a little terrible; there we find twenty-four thousand of the people of Israel put

to death by the express order of God, for the sin of fornication with the Moabites; and in the last chapter of the book of Judges, it is recorded, how almost the whole tribe of Benjamin was destroyed for an abomination of this nature. The seven successive husbands of the virtuous Sara, were all murdered by the devil Asmodeus, as is expressed in the book of Tobias, the first night of their marriage, for giving more way to their lust, than to the end and design of matrimony. Her and Onan were struck dead also upon the place by Almighty God, as it is recorded in the book of Genesis, for committing a sin contrary to the end and duty of marriage. But there would scarce be an end, should I mention all those particular persons whom Almighty God has made visible examples of his anger, and recorded their punishment in holy writ for the terror of others, that they may avoid that rock whereupon so many millions have been shipwrecked.

But I shall pass by all these to come to the greatest of punishments which God inflicts, and but too often upon those who give themselves to this sin, though it appears not to the eyes of men, yet it carries with it all the anger of God and is the mark of his utmost indignation; and this is Almighty God's forsaking them; his leaving them to themselves, to their own passions, and to a reprobate sense. He calls upon them no more, chastises them no more; he no more speaks to their hearts by his preventing grace, or interior inspirations; he no more calls upon them by exterior affliction, or medicinal punishments, to bring them to their duty, but leaves them to work their own wills, and by increasing their sins, to increase their damnation, and that he may punish them in the fulness of their crimes, as the Holy Ghost expresses it.

This is what we find in St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, (c. 1.) speaking of those who know God, but did not honor him according to the knowledge they had of him, but gave the honor due to the incorruptible God, to corruptible creatures. "Wherefore, (says the apostle,) he delivered them up to the desires of

their heart, unto uncleanness, to dishonor their own bodies;" and again, (v. 28.) "he delivered them up to a reprobate sense, to do those things which are not convenient."

To punish a sinner, and to punish him indeed, one would not expose him to the rage of wild beasts, to be torn in pieces by lions and tigers; one would not set up gibbets or racks to fasten him to; one would not prepare ropes to hang him, fire to burn him, or the sword to destroy him; one would not expose him to the miseries of plagues, famine, or war. No; but to abandon him to himself, and his own passions, to fill the measure of his sins, that his damnation may be deeper and surer. The rage of wild beasts, fire or sword, plague, famine, or war, are temporal punishments, and of no long continuance: whereas the being abandoned by God is a spiritual punishment, and drawing many crimes after it, whereby he fixes and determines himself to an eternity of the greatest punishments; wherefore God delivered them up to their depraved desires, unto the passions of ignominy, unto a reprobate sense, filled with all iniquity.

We read in Ezechiel, of a strange figure of this truth; this prophet, surprised to see God abandon his temple, could not hold from saying: "Why Lord! will you no more remember your ancient promises, will you thus leave the place you once chose to dwell in? Yes, I am too much provoked, I will depart far from my sanctuary; and to shew thee that I have reason, look through this wall and see what passes there; and he beheld in vision seventy of the ancients of the House of Israel offering incense to false Gods. Come farther, and I will shew thee greater abominations; and he saw women that sat mourning for the death of Adonis, the god or idol of impurity, &c. Can I stay here—is this a place for the God of purity? I will go; I will depart far from my sanctuary." The application, dear Christians, is easy.

Are not our bodies, by grace, made the temples of the Holy Ghost; and our souls the sanctuary which Christ has chosen?

It is in us, and by us, that he would be known, adored, and loved; it is in us, and by us, he would have our passions sacrificed to him And what do we do, if instead of this we be found offering incense to Venus or Adonis? If instead of sacrificing our passions to him, we sacrifice him to our passions? What can we expect from him, will he bear with these abominations for ever? Will his patience never be tired? Yes, dear Christians, he will depart far from this sanctuary, and leave them to themselves, to their infamous passions, which they have made the idols of their hearts.

He could send them temporal afflictions, but he finds they grow worse upon them; they are so far from reclaiming them from evil, that they occasionally increase it; for, as St. Gregory says, "Great afflictions have one of these two effects, they either make a saint like Job, or a reprobate like Antiochus."

He could speak to their hearts by interior grace, as he has often done, but alas! they resist it all; he many times called upon them, and they as often refused to hear him. The word of God that was once the food of their souls, now makes no impression upon them; they hear the most terrible truths, and they little regard them; they hear the great and obliging promises of God reserved for his servants in another world, but the satisfactions of this stifle all sense of another.

What shall God do when they are not to be gained by promises, nor overawed by threats? When heaven does not relish with them, nor hell affright them? when they continue in sin without remorse, and play with eternity without fear? when all past judgments are slighted, and present afflictions abused? when by continuance they grow obstinate in their evil ways, and deaf to all good counsel? they hear divine truths without any sense, and pray without any devotion? when all the means of salvation are neglected or abused, and the care of their souls has the least share in their thoughts? What shall God do with these, but leave them to themselves to take their own course, and by that

means become their own greatest enemies? Yes, God delivers them up, says the apostle, to a reprobate sense, to ignominious passions, to be their own executioners, and by daily augmenting their sins, to treasure up wrath in the day of wrath.

We have a remarkable confirmation of this truth in the second book of Machabees, where the author of it, after he had reckoned up the many calamities, oppressions, and extraordinary persecutions that nation suffered under Antiochus, gives this admonition to the reader. I beseech all, says he, that shall read this book, that they be not astonished at our adversities, but that they look upon those things that have happened to our nation not to be for the destruction, but the chastising of our generation; for not to suffer sinners a long time to do as they will, but forthwith to punish them, is a make of a great favor. For it is not with us as in other nations, that our Lord patiently expecteth, that when the day of judgment shall come, he may punish them in the fulness of their sins.

It is evident from hence, that there are those, whom God patiently expects not to repentance, for he foresees they will never seriously amend, but till they have completed the measure of their sins, that he may eternally punish them not for two or three crimes, but in the fulness of their sins, that their damnation may be so much the greater, as their sins are more numerous.

Certainly, this is the greatest punishment God ever inflicts upon an obstinate sinner. The general flood that overflowed the whole earth; the fire and sulphur that rained down on Sodom, and the neighboring country; plagues, famine, war, or any other temporal punishments whatever, are small to this. As far as eternity exceeds time, as far as the torments of hell surpass the afflictions of this life, so far this punishment is greater than any we have named. And therefore, above all, sinners have reason to dread this, and all those evil dispositions which lead to it; as the neglect of prayer, contempt of instructions, the hearing the

word of God without fruit, or desire of amendment, neglect or abuse of the sacraments, and obstinacy in sin. It is these which lead a sinner to a hard and obdurate heart, and it is these which force Almighty God to refuse them his grace and abandon them to their own passions, according to that of the psalmist, "The sinner has exasperated our Lord, and in the severity of his anger he looks not after him."

Here you have heard some of the most remarkable punishments which God has inflicted upon such as have given themselves to the sin of impurity; they are recorded in holy writ, and made public to the world, to be a lasting monument of God's great anger, and a continual warning to all ages. Those who were the first examples of the divine vengeance, no doubt, deserved what they suffered; but those who will not take warning by other's misfortunes, as they are more to blame, so they shall be more severely punished.

These, I say, are the public judgments of an offended God; but besides them, no doubt, there are innumerable private ones upon particular persons, in many sudden and unprovided deaths, or by being left in errors, or to a hard heart, and a reprobate sense, by bringing them to a sudden and an untimely end, or by an angry patience, leaving them to fill up the measure of their sins for their greater damnation.

I hope, dear Christians, that these judgments of Almighty God may make such an impression in your heart, that you may fly to his mercy in time, and, by a sincere and speedy repentance, obtain pardon for what is past, and, by a pious and exemplary life, deserve a reward for the time to come.

DISCOURSE III.

ON THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.—Exod. xx. 14.

THE various kinds of the sin of impurity, the grievousness of the offence, and the greatness of the punishments which God has from time to time inflicted upon it, having been explained unto you, it therefore only remains that I explain unto you those remedies which are proper to prevent, or master it, by keeping it at a distance, that it may never enter into our hearts, or to expel it, if it hath once got admittance.

The first remedy or preservative against this vice, is to avoid the occasions, idle friendships, or familiarities; for love is the most dangerous of our passions, it easily insinuates itself into our hearts, but is hardly removed; its pretensions at first are usually innocent, and not any mischief designed, but, like an ungrateful guest, seldom departs till it has ruined the heart that gave it lodging. Should the devil indeed at first propose our ruin, whilst our hearts were our own, we should easily detest him, and be cautious to avoid the snare we saw laid only to catch and ruin us. No, the devil's designs are too malicious to be barefaced, he never discovers the ambush till our hearts are surrounded, and unable to resist; he acts what the stewards said to the bridegroom at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. "Every man at first (says he, John ii. 10.) setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse." An innocent kindness makes the first step, and no more is thought of, till both hearts are so drunk with love, that they can refuse nothing to those they esteem and admire; then the devil shews his cloven foot, and the malice of his designs, by his filthy proposals; then is brought in what is worse, all his fair pretences having had no other end than the deceiving of them more effectually. Thus treacherous is innocent love whilst the devil manages it under-

hand; the number of those who are decoyed into this, and then ruined, should be a warning, one would think, to others, to keep themselves at a distance from all those idle entertainments and familiarities, which are too apt to engage their hearts.

We have many examples in scripture of the power of this ungovernable passion, when once it had got a head, not only amongst the sinful, weak, ignorant, and unwary, but the most innocent, the most holy, the wisest and strongest of men. It was the cause of Adam's disobedience, and of Solomon's idolatry; it drew David into wickedness, and Sampson into ruin

What made Adam (says St. Augustin, L. ii. de Gen. chap. xlii.) break God's command, and eat the forbidden fruit? Did he believe the serpent? Was he so foolishly credulous as to fancy that the eating of it would make him like unto God? No, certainly, he had too much wisdom, not yet blinded by passion, to credit such an improbability. And the apostle St. Paul sufficiently clears him in this point in his epistle to Timothy: "Adam was not seduced, (says he, chap. ii. 14.) but the woman, being seduced, was in the transgression." So Eve, when Almighty God asked her, why hast thou done this? She replied, (Gen iii. 13.) the serpent deceived me, and I did eat. Adam, when asked the same question, answers, not that the woman deceived me; but the woman, says he, whom thou didst assign me for my companion, gave some of the fruit of the tree, and I did eat His affection towards her was so great, that, rather than afflict her, he complied with what she desired; so that it was love betrayed him, not a brutish passion, or carnal love; for, till after his sin, he was a stranger to the rebellion of his passion, but of a kind, complying and easy temper, which often makes persons offend God, rather than displease a friend. Thus love over-persuaded him into ruin; and thus the gate was opened to all evil, to sin, to death, and all the miseries that are in the world. Such power has this passion, when once it has gained the heart.

Again, (says the same Augustin, L. ii. de Gen. chap. xlii.)

what was it that drew Solomon into idolatry? Certainly, the wisest of men could not be so stupid as to place any divinity in an idol, in wood, stone, gold, or silver, or think it worth his while to worship them. There must, doubtless, be some other reason why he paid divine honors, and offered incense to them. Yes, and it was love, the scripture positively assures us of it in the third book of Kings: "He loved a great many women that were strangers and gentiles," says the sacred text, concerning whom God had given his command to the children of Israel: "None of you shall marry any of these women, nor shall any of their people espouse your daughters; for certainly they will pervert you, and make you worship their gods." Solomon, notwithstanding, loved them most passionately, and, in his old age, his heart was so debauched by them, as to adore their strange gods.

Solomon transgressed this law of God, and found his great misfortune, if not his eternal ruin, in his disobedience; and what God foretold happened to him; for most of his women, being of different countries, adored different gods, or idols, with a distinct manner of worship. He ordered, therefore, each to have their respective idol put up for them, and which he did not scruple to adore. Not that Solomon judged these idols worthy of any adoration, says the same St. Augustin, but being besotted by love, he complied with those whom he was loath to offend; and, having first idolized them in his heart, he could not refuse to worship whom they adored.

David was a man, not only of great worth, but also of extraordinary sanctity; a man, as the scripture says of him, according to God's own heart; yet by the violence of his passion, was drawn into a sin of adultery, and by that into a barbarous murder, in which evil state he remained a considerable time, and might have continued and died in it, had not God, by an extraordinary mercy, sent his prophet to him, to open his eyes, and let him see the greatness of his sin, and the danger of his soul, to bring him to true repentance.

Until this unfortunate fall he had lived the favorite of heaven, raised from a hook to a crown, from a shepherd to a king, by God's own choice; because he was a man according to his own heart, and who do all his wills. Acts xiii. 22. After this who dare presume on their own strength, and run into the occasions, when such pillars as these were shaken?

Sampson, as we read in the book of Judges, was a man blessed by God, and endowed with a miraculous strength; he had never been conquered by his enemies, had he not been first conquered by love; in all occasions he was superior to the Philistines, and at one time killed three thousand of them with his own hand. And he had never fallen a prey to the enemies of Israel, had he not fallen in love with an enemy of his country and his own; nor never had lost his eyes, had he not first been blinded by passion.

The fall of those great men, these tall cedars in virtue, and recorded in scripture for our caution, is such a warning to all of an inferior virtue, knowledge, or discretion, that they must be without all excuse, who will not carefully avoid dangerous occasions. Let them not build upon the innocence of their lives, their prudence, or their small inclination to those sins; for who is so innocent, so knowing, or so free from passion as Adam in paradise, whilst protected by original justice? One would have thought him proof against the assaults of fond love; yet he fell, and his fall was great, in losing thereby for himself and posterity, the grace he received with his life, and involving both in innumerable miseries. Let them not rely upon their virtue, their wisdom, or their strength; for who more virtuous than David, wiser than Solomon, or stronger than Sampson? Where giants are worsted, is it not madness for pigmies to venture?

To preserve innocence, therefore, we must carefully avoid the occasions of wickedness; such idle conversation, and fond familiarities, whereby the heart is but too apt to be gained, and innocence lost. The examples I have brought, are clear instances of human weakness, and of the power of that smooth and treach-

erous passion; and the Holy Ghost also assures us, "that he that loveth danger shall perish in it." (Eccles. iii. 27.) To this great preservative we may add,

A second means, very proper to reclaim such, as already have had the misfortune to have been engaged in such wickedness; and it is the serious and frequent consideration of those punishments God has inflicted upon this sin, which certainly, as I have shewed you, are the most remarkable, the most terrible, and the most general that ever were known on earth. Those who in the same circumstances will not take warning by other's misfortunes, must in all reason expect the same fate, if not a worse. For where the patience of God emboldens sinners to continue in their evil ways, they by a great presumption, or greater ingratitude, draw a severe judgment upon their heads; of this they are sufficiently warned by the Holy Ghost, (if they will take any warning,) in the fifth chapter of Ecclesiasticus: "Say not I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me? For the Most High is a patient rewarder." Yes, dear Christians, if he comes slow, he will come sure, and you know not how near your day of doom may be; because you have hitherto escaped his visible anger, do you imagine it will never fall upon you? Because you are not yet made an example of, do you fancy you never shall be? Have a care, this is a dangerous presumption, a sin against the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour says, will not be forgiven in this world, nor the next.

The wise man is so far from encouraging this bold assurance, that he would not have us too confident of the pardon of those sins we have reason to hope are forgiven us. "Be not without fear of sins forgiven, and say not, the mercy of the Lord is great, he will have mercy on the multitude of my sins; for mercy and wrath quickly come from him, and his wrath looketh upon sinners. Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not off from day to day, for his wrath shall come on a sudden, and in time of vengeance he will destroy thee." (Eccles. v. 5, 6, 7, and 8.)

This is not only a thunder clap to awaken an habitual sinner, from his lethargy, but a preservative to the innocent, that they may avoid the danger by avoiding the cause, and prevent a just anger by an innocent life.

A third remedy against this vice is prayer, not a slothful or tepid, but an earnest prayer, which comes from the heart, from a soul pierced with a deep sense of God, and a true desire of this virtue. This also the wise man recommended to us: "As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it—I went to the Lord, and besought him, and said with my whole heart." (Wisdom viii. 21.) As if he had said, I know, O Lord, this virtue is not the effect of temper and constitution, for all are flesh and blood. It is not the privilege of age; for even Solomon, when an old man was debauched by women. It is not the force of a strong resolution; for we have known the strongest resolutions to have had the most fatal falls. But it is thy grace alone, O God, that supports our weakness; it is thy grace alone that gives force to our best endeavors; and it is thy grace alone that preserves this treasure in frail and earthen vessels, as St. Paul calls them, (2 Cor. iv. 7.) to shew that what we have great or strong in us, says he, is not from ourselves, but from God.

We ought then to have recourse to God, and beg this grace of him by sincere and earnest prayer; I say sincere and earnest prayer, because it ought to be accompanied with a real desire to obtain what we ask; not negligently, as if we cared not to be heard, nor coldly, as if we were afraid not to be heard, which was once St. Augustin's disposition sometime before his conversion; he saw well the beauty of continency and the filth of his disorders; the comeliness of a chaste life, and the deformity of his own; and herefore wished for a change, but not too soon. Lord, says he, grant me continence, but not yet a while, as being rather desirous to have that passion satiated, than quite taken away. Alas! this is no prayer to God, because without spirit and without desire, it 's praying only with the mouth, and not with the heart, and only

exposing our wants without desiring relief. This was not the prayer of the wise man, who, knowing he could not be continent, unless God gave it to him, went to his God, and besought him with his whole heart.

Besides, dear Christians, our prayer ought to be accompanied with a great confidence in God, and a great distrust of ourselves, and this we may assign for a fourth and great remedy, or preservative against the sin of impurity: sinners must distrust themselves, and diffide entirely in their own strength, and place their whole confidence in God, who alone can support them. If their own experience hath not made them sensible of this truth, the example of other's frailty is enough to convince them. We have seen, says St. Augustin, (Solil. 19.) and have heard of many more great men, and I cannot but tremble when I call them to mind, whom their virtues had raised even to the sky, and almost fixed habitation there, afterwards to have miserably fallen into grievous sins, and to have died impenitent. We have seen great lights of the church, as it were, stars fall from heaven, being beat down by the tail of the infernal dragon; and on the other side, we have seen some, who lay, as it were groveling on the ground, to have been raised on a sudden by the power of the Almighty. Yes, and there have been those who have preserved chastity in the heat of youth, when temptations were violent, and have lost it in old age, when nature was almost spent: and what was the reason? They spent their youth in humility, and their age in pride; when young, they were continually alarmed, and always in danger, and therefore, they had frequently recourse to God, who never failed to succor them. When in years, they grew secure and confident, and building upon themselves, God withdrew the hand that supported them, and let them fall into their own weakness, and into the depth of sin.

Alas! what is a man when left to himself, and to his own inbred frailty? The very angels in heaven kept not their ground, how much less should flesh and blood stand firm on earth without

God's assistance? This is the argument holy Job makes use of in the fourth chapter of his book, "Behold," says he, "those who attended upon him are not stable, and in his angels he found wickedness; with how much more reason shall those who dwell in houses of clay, and have only earth for their foundation, become moth-eaten like cloth?" "If there was so little firmness in the angelical nature, if so much dross was found amongst such pure gold, what will become of those that live in houses of clay, that carry flesh and blood about them? Will not they, without the particular assistance of God, find their ruin from their inbred concupiscence, which, like the moth, eats the cloth, and destroys the place where it was bred?" Gegor. in hunc. locum Lib. xi. cap. 25.

We have great reason then to distrust ourselves and to place our whole confidence in God, who is our only strength. But the greatest part of the world, whatever they believe in this kind, seem to act otherwise; they retain in the bottom of their hearts a certain confidence in themselves, that makes them believe they can be virtuous when they please; that they can convert themselves when they have a mind; so upon this persuasion they defer their conversion as long as they think fit, and fix it to a certain time and a certain age; and till this time and this age comes, they give themselves up to the desires of their hearts. On the other side there are those who want a due confidence in God, and retain a certain distrust in him; they either look upon him to be hard, and that he will not hear their prayers, and grant their request; or their imagination is so fixed on the difficulty of their conversion itself, that they scarce think on the power of God; they do not say indeed, he cannot assist them, but they very much fear he will not help them. This, no doubt, is a great delusion of the devil. Can they imagine, that he who preserved them when they were wicked and ran from him, that he will forsake them when they grow good, and come to him? will he who looked upon them when they contemned him, reject them when they fear him? Will he who sought them when wicked, to redeem them; when

redeemed, will he cast them off to destroy them? We cannot sure retain such thoughts of an infinite goodness. We ought therefore to have both a great distrust in ourselves, and a great confidence in God: and both these so balanced by our own faithful endeavor, that at the same time we may carefully endeavor to gain ourselves what we expect from God. And therefore we ought so to confide in God, as if all were to come from him, and so to labor ourselves, as if all were to be had from us. And this will put us upon a fifth and last remedy, which is fasting and mortification of the flesh; thus to gain that mastery over our passions by our actions, which we desire by our prayers. This is what holy David practised upon himself to recommend it to us. "I humbled my soul with fasting," says he, "I changed my garments, and put on sackcloth." And this was the preservative St. Hierom used himself, while he preached it to his neighbor: We are to quench, (says he,) the fiery darts of the devil, by temperance and rigorous fasts; and herein fear not to prejudice your health, for it is better to have your body sick, than your soul distempered. And this is what our Saviour teaches to be absolutely necessary; for when he had cast out the unclean spirit, which his disciples could not, he told them that this sort of devil could not be cast out but by prayer and fasting. He joins fasting to prayer, to put us in mind that we must so expect our deliverance from God by prayer, that we neglect not the usual means of fasting, mortification and penance.

And this, in fine, is what nature and our own reason teaches us; for we do not add, but withdraw fuel when we design to quench a fire; when your house is on flame, you do not fling on faggots to put it out, but remove as much as you can all combustible matter, that it may die for want of what would feed it. Thus, as the heat of concupiscence is augmented by intemperance and a full table, it is certainly to be allayed by abstinence and fasting; for none can really desire to master a passion, that does not withdraw what he knows feeds it.

Here you see, dear Christians, the proper remedies or preservative to master an infamous passion, so detestable to God, that he has chastised it with the most signal and dreadful punishments, and so dangerous to us, that it sweeps away millions into hell, this, as St. Augustin seems to allude to, (Solil. cap. 19.) is the tail of the infernal dragon St. John mentions in the revelations. (Rev. xii. 4.) that swept away the third part of the stars of heaven. None can be secure of themselves, but such as having a true sense of their danger, avoid occasions as much as possible, and in any difficulty have recourse to God, in an humble and earnest prayer, at the same time omitting nothing on their parts, that may contribute to weaken the passion of their bodies, and increase the fear of God in their souls. Thus living like angels on earth, that they be so happy as to reign with them in heaven.

DISCOURSE I.

IN THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not steal.—Exod. xx. 15.

WHAT we most value in this world is our life, our reputation, and our goods. Almighty God, therefore, thought it not enough to protect our bodies from injuries, and our lives from unjust invasion by this commandment, *Thou shalt not kill;* and the honor and reputation of our families from any blemish or aspersion, by that other, *Thou shalt not commit adultery;* but he defends likewise our exterior goods, and prevents their being taken from us, or embezzled by this seventh commandment, *Thou shalt not steal.*

In these precepts there is nothing but what is engrafted in our nature, and built upon two clear principles of reason. The first is delivered to us by our Saviour in St. Matthew, where he says, "Whatever you would have men do to you do you also to them; for this is the law and the prophets." (Chap. vii. 12.) As you

would have others be in all things just to you, be you in every thing just to them. The second is set down in the fourth chapter of Tobias: "See thou never do to another what thou wouldst hate to have done to thee by another." (Ver. 16.) Would but people apply these rules, which the light of nature makes clear to them, to all those actions which regard their neighbor, they might easily judge whether they were good or bad, commendable or discommendable, just or unjust.

Now, dear Christians, theft, or stealing, is a private taking away, or an unjust detaining what belongs to another. But that you may clearly understand this definition, I shall explain every word. It is said to be a private taking away, to distinguish theft from rapine, or robbery, which is an open and violent taking away of what belongs to others; and is a greater sin, because it adds violence and infamy to him that is forced from what is his own. There is added, or an unjust detaining, because a man may come honestly by what belongs to others, as when a thing is found, or deposited and entrusted with them for another, or falls any way into their hands, they having of it thus is no fault; but the unjust detaining of it contrary to the will of the owner, is always theft, as being an equal injury. Under those words, what belongs to another, is understood, whatever a man is in possession of, whether he has the property, or only the use of it, whether he has the real dominion, or it be only entrusted to his care. Thus circumstances may so happen, that a man may be guilty of theft in stealing again his own stolen goods, when he may recover them other ways, by due course of law, and without any inconvenience to himself, or fear of scandal to his neighbor; and thus again he may be guilty of theft in stealing his own when deposited under another's care and custody, who in law is to be answerable for it.

But he is not guilty of theft who secures his neighbor's goods, which are carelessly left, lest they be really stolen by thieves; or to make the owner more careful, when there is no danger of rash judgments, imprecations, or oaths. Nor is that wife guilty of

theft, who privately takes from a spendthrift husband, what is necessary for the decent subsistence of her family, according to her condition.

Now, there are several kinds of theft: First, private theft, between man and man. Secondly, public theft, when stolen from the commonwealth or public treasury; of this those are guilty, who misapply the public stock, or turn it to their own private uses; who own not all they have received, or charge the public with what they have not expended; and herein, overseers of the poor, executors of last wills, and all those who have the trust or charge of what belongs to others, and passes through their hands, are carefully to examine themselves. They also are guilty, who defraud from just taxes, or lay them unequally; unreasonably oppressing some, and as unjustly favoring others; or who charge particulars with more than is laid upon them, and put the overplus in their own pockets; or who commit any injustice of this kind.

A third sort of theft is, when a man or woman is stolen or spirited away, and sold for a slave; of this Almighty God speaks in the twenty-first chapter of Exodus: "He that shall steal a man and sell him, being convicted of the guilt," says he, "shall be put to death." Ver. 16.

A fourth kind is sacrilege, which is the stealing of any thing that is holy, or deputed to the service of God; or if the thing stolen be not holy, it is sacrilege still, if it be stolen out of a holy place, as from the altar, or out of the church. The last kind is robbery, which is a taking away by force what belongs to another of which I have spoken.

Now that theft is a mortal sin none doubt; and if they did, the testimony of the word of God is sufficient to convince them of the truth; for as St. Paul assures us, that it excludes the authors from the kingdom of heaven; "Do not err; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor liers with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor

railers, nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) And wo to him, (says the prophet Habacuc,) that heapeth together that which is not his own. Besides, it is evidently contrary to justice, whose office it is to give every one his own. It is contrary to charity, as being an injury to our neighbor; and it is also contrary to the very principles of reason, which no wickedness can blot out of our hearts; for even what thief is there that will endure a thief? It is contrary, in fine, to the laws of nations, who equally punish it with death, and which if they did not, we might bid adieu to human society. I might add, in aggravation of this fault, the many rash judgments, oaths and curses, which it usually occasions, and all the sins of others who are any ways accessory to it, as the encouragers, receivers, partakers, &c.

So the question is not, whether theft be a mortal sin, for of that I think none doubt, but what quantity it is that amounts to a mortal sin. Here some are willing to favor themselves whilst others are too severe, and enhance the matter. For my part, I shall determine nothing of myself, but give you the judgment of the wise and learned in this matter. Now these generally agree and determine, that it is a mortal sin to steal the quantity of a day laborer's wages, for one day, from any person either in money, or in money worth. Under the name of stealing is comprehended all manner of cheating in weight, measure or reckoning; all wilful waste, or embezzling other person's goods, and the like, with all manner of cheating whatever, to the value, I say, of a day laborer's wages for one day, or thereabouts.

If any one thinks this too hard, I would have them reflect, that, by the law of this nation, it is a hanging matter to steal the quantity or value of thirteen pence halfpenny. Now it is not credible, that a nation would agree to inflict generally the penalty of death, which is the greatest of punishments, upon a fault that was not a mortal sin, in regard of any person how rich soever. It is true, a much less quantity in some circumstances,

may be a mortal sin; where the theft is from a person who is very poor, or in great want; or when a much greater damage follows from a small theft. As for example, when one steals a workman's tools, whereby he loses a day's work, or the like.

Hence it is universally agreed on, that we cannot lessen the fault in proportion to the riches of the person from whom we steal, or whose goods we mispend; for those who have much, have much to do with it; and doubtless, have as just a right to every farthing they have, as any of those have who are much poorer; and, therefore, we act contrary to justice, whenever we take, mispend, embezzle, or dispose, without their order or consent, of what belongs to them, and not to us. From hence we may conclude,

First. That they are guilty of theft, who steal from the rich to give to the poor, under the pretence of alms without the consent of the owners; for, doubtless, this is a mistaken charity: "Perhaps, (says Augustin, Serm. 287.) some may say to themselves there are many rich Christians, who are tenacious, or covetous; I shall, therefore, commit no sin, if I steal from them to give to the poor; they do no good with it, and I may have a reward for my charity. In this they sin against their own souls; for this suggestion comes from the devil, and by this sort of alms they do not lessen, but increase their sins," says this learned father.

Secondly. They are guilty of theft, who steal from the rich and wealthy, under pretence that they want it not, that they will not miss it, or that they will not be poorer for it, &c. This, says the catechism of the Council of Trent, is not only a miserable defence, but a wicked pretence.

Thirdly. They are guilty of a mortal sin of theft, who designedly take a considerable quantity, by small repeated thefts from the same or different persons; for, as St. Thomas says, (ii. 2. 66. a. 6. ad. 3.) the will of stealing a considerable quantity, is a mortal sin, much more the real stealing of it. And thus those sin who use false weights and false measures, or who buy with a

large bushel, or strike, and sell with a less, &c. Hence it is that Almighty God in the twenty-fifth chapter of Deuteronomy, (v. 13.) expressly forbids this practice, and declares that it is an abomination to him: "Thou shalt not have divers weights in thy bag, a greater and a less; neither shall there be in thy house a greater bushel, and a less; for the Lord thy God abhorreth him that doeth these things, and he hateth all injustice." And in the Proverbs, (c. xi. 1.) "A deceitful balance is an abomination before the Lord." Now, certainly, nothing can be an abomination to him, but what is a mortal sin. And those who defraud others by false weights, false measures, or false reckoning, usually do it in a small quantity at a time. This truth likewise appears evidently from the condemnation of the contrary doctrine by Pope Innocent XI., wherein it was affirmed, "That none were obliged, under mortal sin, to restore what they had taken away by small thefts, how great soever the sum, so taken, might amount to." This, I say, was condemned in the year 1679, amongst other propositions of corrupt morality.

Fourthly. Those are guilty of theft, who take not due care to pay their debts, or borrow more than, in all probability, they will be able to pay, or break designedly to defraud their creditors, and compound at an under rate, when able to pay more; for this is but picking people's pockets another way.

Fifthly. They are guilty of theft, who defraud workmen of their hire, and servants of their wages; and, on the other side, as the said Catechism of the Council of Trent says, those laborer's likewise, and servants, are guilty of theft, who, receiving unjustly their hire, do not justly perform their work; but mispend, or loiter away their time, or employ it in what they ought not, so that they do not so much work, or so well, as other ways they might and ought; for, being hired, their time is not their own, but his who pays them; if, therefore, they defraud him, they are evidently unjust. As also those are guilty of theft, who being in any public or private employment, or office, receive the salary,

but do not faithfully discharge the duties incumbent upon them Neither can they be excused, who take not due care of what is under their charge, but let their masters suffer by their neglect, carelessness, or want of taking due pains, which may happen many ways. Likewise those tradesmen, or others, are guilty of theft, who require more materials than are necessary for their work: and mispend, give away, or take to themselves what is overplus; or who put others to charges, to save themselves a little work; as also all those who take materials, as brick, timber, &c., contrary to the will of the owner, to build or repair their houses, under pretence that they belong to those from whom they steal it, and it is not for their own, but their profit. In this case the owner is to be the only judge.

Sixthly. They are guilty of theft, who, knowingly, sell or buy stolen goods; for to these they can have no title in prejudice to the right owner. Those also who sell perished goods for warrantable, damaged for good, rotten for sound, distempered for healthy, counterfeit for true, &c. And those who put into a buyer's hands what they know to be useless to the end for which it is bought; for all this is evidently unjust.

Seventhly. They are guilty of theft, who find things and do not carefully endeavor to find out the owners; for what thou hast found, (says St. Augustin, Lib. 50. Hom. 6.) and hast not restored, thou hast stolen it. Those also are guilty, who retain by them what belongs to others contrary to the will of the owners, howsoever they have come by it; for what is not their own ought to be restored. Those also who keep others out of their own by false deeds, or false witnesses, by power or interest, or by unjustly detaining their deeds and papers, whereby they may prove their title, with whatever else of this kind.

Eighthly. Those are guilty of theft, who, by pretending great losses, extreme poverty, or very pressing wants, gain belief, when in reality they are not so; thus they abuse the charity of good people, and are robbers of such as are really poor, and in hard

circumstances; and are so much the more wicked as they add lies to their theft.

Ninthly. They are guilty of theft, who, though they do not steal themselves, yet are accessory to it by their command, allowance, or persuasion; by receiving and securing stolen goods; or by taking part of, or sharing in them; or by not hindering the theft, when it was in their power to prevent it; or by not discovering the thief, that the goods may be retrieved, and the persons injured come to their own; especially where the duty of their employment and charge requires this of them. "They, (says St. Paul, Rom. i. 32.) who do such things are worthy of death; and not only they that do them, but they also that consent to them that do them." Nor can they be excused, who take no care to prevent trespassing upon their neighbor, but feed their cattle in other people's ground, &c.; with variety of other injustices, which a covetous temper, and an ill conscience, daily invent and practise; all which would be prevented, did people but really do as they would be done by.

In fine, St Thomas teaches, there is no title that can excuse us from theft, when we take what belongs to others, contrary to the owner's will, but only extreme necessity. When what we take is necessary to preserve life, and without which we should, at that time, in all probability have perished, not being able to have had what we wanted by begging, or any other lawful way; for in such a hard circumstance no one is supposed to be unwilling to relieve.

As to buying and selling, those are guilty of theft, who sell above a just price, or buy beneath the real value; who abuse the ignorance or necessity of the seller, to have goods or cattle at or under rate; or who take money to sell a good bargain: or who use lies, or oaths, to get more than their merchandize is worth, and thus impose upon the ignorant: these break more than one commandment, for they add perjury to theft. Though it be a hard matter to set a just price upon any thing, yet according to

the market rates, people easily discover, and know when they cheat, and when they are cheated, for we find the injured party usually complain of it.

We may add to these the many cheats that are practised in gaming, cards, dice, or any other recreation: in making booty matches, with the evil consequences of them; besides many other inventions they have to pick people's pockets, and enrich themselves at the expense of their souls. What feeling can these have of humanity, who make a cruel advantage out of other's ruin, and seek pleasure in their losses and miseries? Or what sense can they have of another world, who renounce a happy eternity for a short, unjust gain, and chose to go to hell to gain here a temporal advantage?

I shall not pretend to run over all the injustices which are often practised by people of all professions; by lawyers, doctors, surgeons, executors, trustees, guardians, laborers, tradesmen, or by such as are in public employments, &c. Nor shall I undertake to mention the variety of ways and means which a restless covetousness has invented to impose on the ignorant, and cheat the unwary: to cover or hide a defect, and to make that pass for good, which is far from what it is pretended to be. Those who practise these unwarrantable ways, are sensible of them, and need not my information to know their duty. They may for a time be successful in evil, and impose upon men; but they cannot impose upon God; so in the end, they will find the great cheat to be upon their own souls, when they come to be judged according to their works.

St. Thomas assures us, that extreme necessity is the only title that can excuse us from theft, when we take from others any thing without their consent. There have been those who have allowed stealing, not only in extreme, but also in great necessity; but this doctrine was condemned by Pope Innocent XI., March 4, 1679. The poor, no doubt, deserve great compassion, and those who relieve them not, out of their superfluity, will find a

terrible judgment from their common Lord another day; and those still a much greater, who any ways oppress them. However, in the mean time, the poor are not to be their own carvers, but humbly recommend their condition to God, who will not see them want, but will both raise them friends, and reward their patience. 'Let your manners be without covetousness, (says St. Paul, Heb. xiii. 5.) contented with such things as you have; for he hath said, I will not leave thee, neither will I forsake thee. No, seek but first the kingdom of heaven, and all things else shall be provided for you."

DISCOURSE II.

ON THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

If it were taken away by stealth, he shall make the loss good to the owner.
Exod. xxii. 12.

This is the positive law of God; this is the law written in our hearts; this is the law all nations agree in; and so advantageous to human society, that were it but punctually observed, it would change the face of the world, and secure each particular in his right and property. It would preserve the poor from the oppression of the rich; and the simple and unwary from the knavery of designing men. It would also guard the rich from the private attempts of the poor and needy; and protect the industrious from the pilfering of lazy drones, who knavishly live upon the labors of others Thus all would, with security, enjoy what God had been pleased to give them, and right would be a sufficient protection against all wrong.

But the corruption of the world is too great to expect such a blessing; the best precautions, therefore, are taken to prevent injustice, and preserve every one in his right. Theft is punished with death by men, when the criminal is convicted of the fact:

and with damnation by Almighty God, when restitution is not made by those who are able; and these are the greatest punishments that can be inflicted, by man or God, death and damnation; and enough, one would think to keep rational creatures within the bounds of duty, did not experience convince us of the contrary.

It is an indispensable duty, built upon reason as well as upon the law of God and the law of nations, to satisfy those we have injured, and repair the damages we have unjustly caused. Now, as there are many ways whereby we may injure our neighbor, so there are many heads from whence the obligations of restitution may arise. But as to the first—

Were repentance and confession sufficient to cancel the sins of injustice, and restore us to the friendship of God, without repairing the injury done to our neighbor, theft and injustice would be commodious sins, and people would be emboldened to do evil, could they as easily escape the laws of God, as they can those of men. But the contrary is so undeniably evident, that injustice seems to be the foolishest of sins that can be committed by such as have any thoughts of salvation; because from God forgiveness cannot be had, (Regula juris in Sext. 4.) where restitution is not made. This is the constant principle taken out of St. Augustin, and entered into the canon law, and denied by none; and it was long before delivered to us by the prophet Ezechiel, xxxiii. 15, "If the wicked man restore the pledge, and render what he had robbed and walk in the commandments of life, and do no unjust thing, he shall surely live, and shall not die." Here life is promised to such as are guilty of the sins of injustice, but it is upon condition, that they not only do penance for them, but likewise do justice, return what they have wrongfully taken away, or unjustly detain from others. On these, and only these terms, the prophet assures them of the pardon of their sins. And this stands with reason; for if a real repentance be necessary for the pardon of our sins, as certainly it is, satisfaction is doubtless necessary;

for how can there be a real will to repent of what we have done amiss, where there is not a real will to satisfy for it as far as we are able? How can any one be sorrowful for the injustice he has committed, whilst he still designs to continue the injustice? How can he have a regret in his heart, for having endamaged another, when he has no real mind to repair the damage? No, these dispositions are inconsistent in the same heart: he, therefore, who truly repents for his fault, is doubtless at the same time willing to satisfy both God and man; God, by humiliation and penance, for the affront and injury done him; man, by making him satisfaction to his power, for what damage soever he has caused, or unjustly occasioned; otherwise he receives his damnation when he receives the sacraments.

Hence it is St. Augustin delivers this doctrine, in his letter to Macedonius, (Epist. 153. L. 54.) "They are the worst sort of men, (says he,) whom you mentioned to me, we reap no benefit from a healing sacrament of penance; for where injustice is the sin, if what is taken away be not restored in itself, or in what is equivalent, there is only a pretence of, and not a real repentance; for there is no forgiveness to be had where restitution is not made; and whosoever dissuades another from restoring what he has wrongfully taken away, or obliges him not when he has recourse to him to return what is not justly his own, becomes a sharer in the frand, and partner in the wickedness. It is cruelty, and not compassion, to flatter others in their evil ways; and they do not help, but ruin them, who contribute to make them easy in their injustice, or unjust practices. For our part, whom we know to be guilty, with all their episcopal authority we endeavor to bring to their duty: some we admoish, others we reprehend, sometimes privately, and sometimes publicly, accordingly as we judge it may conduce most to the offender's good, considering the circumstances of the person, and nature of the crime; and some there are whom we separate from holy communion, and deny them the sacraments of the church." This, dear Christians, is, and has

been the doctrine and practice in all ages, and so clear, that I shall not insist longer upon it.

Now, I am satisfied that many persons who read this, will say to themselves, God be thanked, I am not at all concerned in this matter, I have done no body any wrong; but I hope this discourse will make some impression upon such and such as have done me a great deal. I believe you would be surprised, could you but see into the hearts of those you are persuaded have injured you, to find the same thought there, and as great a calm in their consciences as you have in yours, and much peace where you expect to see much uneasiness; and so it is, so far our own interest blinds us! Thus one complains of another, and neither will be in the wrong; thus masters complain of the damages received by the neglect of servants, and servants of the unjust proceedings of masters; thus relations complain mutually of relations, and neighbors of unjust dealings from neighbors; and thus the whole world is full of the like complaints, of injustices received: and yet who own they have done them?

What quarrels and law-suits upon this account? And both plaintiff and defendant make you believe they are in the right, and that they have received the wrong; yet doubtless one of them has a bad plea, though neither see it, so blind our own interest makes us. Upon this account, therefore, every one ought to suspect themselves, and impartially examine their own proceeding when any thing is laid to their charge; and not to keep their thoughts continually fixed on that side only, whereon they seem to have received wrong. But to descend to particulars, it is certain that from the breach of any of the commandments which regard our neighbor, there generally arises an obligation of restitution. As first, from the fifth commandment, *Thou shalt not kill.* For though he who unjustly kills or wounds a man, cannot restore his life or limbs, nor anything equivalent to them, they being above all estimation; yet he is obliged to repay his charges of the surgeon and the loss of so many days' work as hap-

pened during the poor man's cure, and all other occasional expenses upon that account; if death followed, he is obliged to relieve the distressed family, in proportion to the damage they suffer by his death, according to the estimation of a prudent person. And the like is to be observed, when a person is maliciously and unjustly cast into prison; for whosoever is the unjust cause of damage, is certainly obliged to make satisfaction.

Those who have defamed any, and much lessened them in the esteem of the world (especially such as live by their credit, or are only serviceable to their neighbor by their reputation) are obliged to restore their good name, and such temporal damages as were really occasioned by the defamation, as the loss of some advantageous employment, or the immediate hopes of it, or any other worldly advantage. Every one also is obliged to make good whatever real damages they have caused by their lies, fraud, or knavery.

Those who have been the spiritual ruin of others, that is, drawn them into sin and wickedness, though they cannot restore them again to grace, yet they are obliged to endeavor to reclaim them by good advice and good example, and as far as they can to engage others in the same pious design, whose interest and credit may be more effectual with them.

From the sixth commandment, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, may arise also the obligation of restitution; for where any prove so wicked as to have children in an unlawful way, they are obliged to own and maintain them if able; and not to run away and leave them to the parish, or to be brought up at the expense of those to whom they do not belong; and therefore obliged to pay all charges thus unjustly occasioned.

Who, by great proposals, importunate persuasions, or promises of marriage, seduce a virgin into wickedness, and thereby bring her to infamy, are obliged to repair the injury by marrying her, or (where there may be great inequality in their conditions) to

make such an addition to her fortune, that she may marry as well as if she had not lost her credit.

From the seventh commandment, *Thou shalt not steal*, arises an obligation of restitution upon all those accounts, whereby theft, robbery, or any injustice is committed. So whatever we have in our hands or dominion, that belongs to others, as land, money, goods, or the like, we are obliged to restore, as soon as we know and are satisfied it belongs to another; for the detaining of it after this, is the continuing of an injustice.

Secondly. Whatever we have taken from others openly or privately, by theft, or by robbery, we are obliged to restore it, the thing itself if we have it by us, with an addition to it as far as it has been endamaged by us, with all the loss the injured person has suffered all the time we unjustly detained it from him Or if it be killed, disposed of, or spent, we must restore the full value of it, with all real damages occasioned by the want of it since the theft was committed.

Thirdly. Those are obliged to restitution, who have cheated others in weight, measure, reckoning, or any other way, or who have put off defective, unwarrantable, or perished goods, for good, sound, and perfect; or who cozened others likewise in gaming, wagers, or any unjust practice; or who have over-reached their neighbor in bargaining, and considerably exceeded the bounds of a just price. It is not only a covetous humor, and a desire to grow rich, or an unreasonable fear of want, that engages people in injustice; but it is the general practice of the world, that embolden them in unwarrantable ways. But alas! the multitude of offenders does not lessen, but increase the offence; besides, at the day of judgment, what plea can numbers be, where the far greatest number will be condemned to eternal flames? And if then the neglect of alms-deeds, the not giving away our own be condemned without mercy, what will become of injustice, whereby we have wrongfully taken away what belonged to others?

Fourthly. Those are obliged to restitution, who have taken

or bought things of those who could not give or sell; as children, servants, or those who have not the disposal of what they are willing to part withal. Those who knowingly buy stolen goods, or if they did not suspect them when bought, as soon as they are satisfied of the theft, and the person to whom they belong, they are obliged to restore them to the owner, without expecting to be repaid the price they gave for them; for none can be obliged to buy their own, and therefore we ought to be cautious how we buy suspected goods.

Fifthly. They are obliged to restitution, who have endamaged other people's goods under their care, or custody, or have mispent or disposed of them contrary to the will of the owner; or who have let others suffer through their neglect, or for want of taking due care and pains, when obliged thereunto by bargain or contract, or whatever injustice they may have occasioned in their employments, service, trade, profession, trust, &c. as also all those who have oppressed the poor, or by might overcome right, or forced any, not able to help themselves, to hard and unequal terms, &c.

Sixthly. All those are obliged to restitution, who are accessory to any theft or injustice, and commit it by common consent, or who command or order it, as parents do their children, masters their servants; or who persuade and encourage it, when such encouragement is the cause of the injustice; or who do not prevent the doing of it when they can, or discover it not when done, when in duty obliged to it by their place or employment; or who take money to hold their tongues, &c. All those likewise who take part in the injustice, and share in the theft, or receive and conceal the stolen goods. Now as each accessory is the unjust cause of the whole damage, so in default of others contributing their shares, each is obliged to the restitution of the whole.

Seventhly. Those are obliged to restitution, who, through hatred, fraud, lies, or any unjust means, hinder another from gaining an advantageous employment when fit for it; or some

lawful gain, when he is in the immediate prospect and hopes of it; or who by the like unwarrantable ways, get them turned out, or deprived of what they have got. Here the restitution is to be made in full, where a person is unjustly deprived of what he has in possession; but where he was only in prospect, in proportion to his hopes; because a man has a right not to be unjustly hindered from making or gaining a lawful advantage; and this may happen in abundance of circumstances. Thus who, by fraud, lies, or any unjust practices, persuade a man to change his will, and to make another, or to leave out such or such legacies, is obliged to restitution in proportion to the hopes they that are left out had of such an inheritance, or such legacies; and the same is to be practised in the like occurrences.

This, I say, where persons make use of frauds, lies, and unjust means; for where they use only fair arguments and persuasions to a man, who has it in his power to do what he pleases, there is no injustice done to any, what alteration soever he makes, if they work not upon his weakness by importunate persuasions.

Eighthly. The obligation of restitution devolves upon the heir or executor of him who leaves behind him what belongs to others; and thus none can, with a good conscience, enter upon an estate he knows to be unjustly got, and from whom. Heirs are generally willing to rely upon the conscience of the deceased; but where the injustice is apparent, this plea is evidently insufficient. In fine, in heirs, executors, administrators, or the like, there may be many opportunities of practicing injustice, whereof if they make use, they are obliged to restitution of all they have wronged, either creditor or legatee.

From the eighth commandment, *Thou shalt not bear false witness*, there arises also an obligation of restitution: where witnesses forswear themselves, and thereby defend, or gain a bad cause, to the prejudice of him who has right on his side; here the false witness is obliged, as far as he is able, to repair all the damages occasioned by his false oath; or if a witness takes a bribe to swear

false, he is obliged to return it, not to him that gave it, because he gave it contrary to law; but to him he injured by his false oath; or to the poor, if it so happens he injures none. If he takes a bribe to swear true, he is obliged to return it to him who gave it; for, considering the knavery of the world, he might have some just reason to give it; but no one can in justice receive it. because he that swears is otherwise obliged to do his duty, and to swear true.

And thus neither judge, witness, abitrator, or any other can take a bribe, either to do or not to do their duty in any occurrence. Witnesses, or the like, may lawfully take the expenses and charges of their journey, and an equivalent for their loss of time, with what gratuity those who employed them are pleased to give when the business is over, but must not take a bribe.

These are some of the most usual heads from whence the duty of restitution arises, but far from all; for as the ways of injustice are almost infinite, so the obligation of restoring is as extensive.

I only add, that restitution is always to be made immediately if we are able, if not, as soon as we are able, taking what care we can; because, as injustice is an injury to our neighbor, so not repairing it when able, is a continuing of the injury to another's daily damage. Nothing excuses from restitution but incapacity and great want in him who has done the injury, or remission of the obligation by him who has received the injury.

You see, dear Christians, from these directions and hints, the obligation of restitution, without which, those who have in any kind injured others, in point of justice, in their good name, or in their goods, can never hope to enter into the kingdom of heaven or to escape the flames of hell. For forgiveness is not to be had where restitution is not made.

Yet for all this, people are hardly brought to restitution; for we daily hear great complaints of injustice received, and little satisfaction made by any, but where they are forced to it by dint of law, and fear of greater loss: and therefore the prophet Haba-

cue has reason to say, "Wo to him that heapeth together that which is not his own; how long also doth he load himself with thick clay?" (Chap. ii. 6.) He calls the possession of what is not our own a thick or deep clay, into which when once we are plunged, we hardly get out.

But is there any thing in the world, and where the possession of it is so short, that deserves the forfeiture of heaven? Or is there any thing here, that can be equivalent to, and recompense the eternal pains of hell? Is it not better then to return to every one their own, and to live poor and honest, and to gain heaven, than for a little worldly enjoyment for ourselves, or posterity, to be at our death buried in hell? Yes, and I hope the promises of the one, and the fear of the other, will bring all to their duty; it is at least what I heartily wish.

DISCOURSE I

ON THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.—Exod. xx. 16.

JUSTICE obliges us to give to every one his own, and to wrong none, and if we have, to make them restitution. Nature is but too averse to this duty, and always ready in favor of interest, to find out pretences to avoid the obligation; and therefore they are to be compelled by law. Upon this it is, that in all nations public places of judicature are erected, terms assigned, and judges created who, being indifferent to both parties, may give an impartial sentence. Hither those who are aggrieved may have recourse, and be heard; the plaintiff may propose, and prove his wrongs; and the defendant make the best of his cause and title.

But all this, how wisely soever ordained, would be to little purpose, considering the corruption of mankind, were not witnesses obliged, upon all trials, to swear true; and therefore it is

Almighty God has given us this eighth commandment: *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

To bear false witness is to affirm a thing upon word or oath to be true, when we know or believe it to be false; or to declare a thing to be false, which we know, or think, to be true; and this, whether it be by word of mouth, or by writing, by signs, or any exterior behavior, by which we discover our meaning. This may happen upon several occasions, in public, or in private, in open court, or upon ordinary occasions.

When it happens in open court, and where witnesses are upon their oath, it is either in cases of life and death, or estates and fortune, as land, money, goods, damages, and the like. Now, when a person bears false witness, where a man's life is at stake, he commits two grievous sins, perjury and murder, and thus becomes extremely injurious both to God and man; to God, by abusing his sacred name, and calling upon him to witness his villainy; injurious to man, and, in the highest degree, by wrongfully taking away his life. It is not the judge that condemns, nor the hangman that executes, but the false witness that murders him. The judge is allowed to follow the testimony of a legal witness; and the hangman is not to weigh the merits of the cause but to do his duty. The whole guilt therefore falls upon the false witness.

On the contrary, if a man swears false in the defence of a criminal, and, out of friendship, preserves a knave from the gallows, he is equally guilty of perjury, and highly injurious to the public, by letting loose a villain, and turning him again upon the world.

Those that bear false witness in trials of less concern than life, as an estate, money, damages, or the like, are doubtless guilty of perjury, being never admitted to be witnesses till they are sworn. They are also guilty of all damages they occasion by their false oath, to the person who has a just title or right on his side; and their crime is more or less enormous, in proportion to the damage

they have caused. And, what is to be particularly observed, they are liable and obliged to restitution of all the loss and wrong their perjury hath brought upon their neighbor; and this in present, as far as they are able, and the rest as they become able, unless the unjust possessor pays back what he has thus got, and gives up his title to what he injuriously detains, and enjoys in prejudice of the right owner, with all charges he has unjustly casioned.

Hence, besides the wickedness, it is an unfortunate thing to be ntangled in sins of injustice upon other people's account, espe-ially where the matter is considerable; for it will doubtless prove their ruin; because, having done the injustice, they are obliged, out of their own, to make satisfaction to those they have wronged, not only out of their present fortune, as far as it will reach, excepting a bare maintenance, but also out of what they shall be masters of as it comes in, till the wrong be repaired and fully satisfied.

Here also it is clear, that witnesses are not to be informed by those who manage the cause, what they are to swear, that they may gain their point, but they are to declare the truth, and nothing but the truth, and what they have by their own knowledge, and not by hearsay, or only probable conjectures.

Those who bear false witness usually do it either out of fear, love, or interest. Out of fear, when overawed to it by such as are above them, and upon whom they depend; out of love, when it is a friend or relation whom they would oblige; out of interest, when they receive a bribe, a sum of money for their unjust service. However it be, they are far from being gainers by the bargain, for they must either refund the money they have taken to the person they have injured, and repair all damage they have occasioned whatever, and as far as they are able, or they can never hope to see the face of God, nor share in his bliss; but must expect to be cast into eternal darkness, and to be chained in everlasting flames; one or must certainly be their lot,

or rather their choice; for where injustice is at the bottom of the crime, forgiveness is not to be had, where restitution is not made.

Such as bear false witness out of fear, shew they fear men more than God; and choose to live easy here, whatever they may do hereafter. Those who do it out of affection, discover a mistaken, and not a real love for their friend, and none for themselves; for to love thus, is to love them to their ruin; for what else can it be, whilst they live in the usurpation of what belongs to others? Such, in fine, as commit this sin out of interest, give a clear proof, that they prefer temporal before eternal; who, for a little unjust gain, choose to lose everlasting wealth, even when eternal woes must also be the consequence of such a loss.

Those who do these things, upon any account, may bear the name of Christians, but certainly cannot believe in Christ and his promises; for sure they cannot hope to please a righteous God by wronging their neighbor, nor in the end expect a crown of justice, for having lived and died in the ways of injustice. No; the great blessing of God, they know, belongs only to the just, as Christ himself assures us: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill." Matt. v. 6.

I doubt not but after this some, who are guilty of great injustices, may possibly persuade themselves, that, by repentance, confession, and a few prayers, or the like, by way of satisfaction, they may clear their scores, and appease the anger of an offended God. But they deceive themselves, for though this be sufficient in regard of all other sins, where injustice lies not at the root, yet where this virtue is violated, and our neighbor injured, forgiveness is not to be had, where restitution is not made.

And here all those must take the hint, who in any measure contribute, by persuasions, promises, threats, presents, or any other way, to move a person to give in false witness; and much more those, who are the greatest gainers by such unjust practices.

And, by the bye, those cannot but be alarmed, who having the

management of other people's business on their hands, take money from a buyer to allow him a good bargain; these are injurious to those who employ them, who always suffer by such dealings; for such chapmen do not make presents, but where they expect to be gainers by them.

After this, dear Christians, you cannot wonder the scriptures should be so severe in condemning this crime, which is there declared to be hateful to Almighty God. "Six things there are," says the wise man in the book of Proverbs, which the Lord hateth, viz., "haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked plots, feet that are swift to run into mischief, and a deceitful witness that uttereth lies." (Chap. vi. 16, &c.) And in the twenty-fifth chapter: "A man that beareth false witness against his neighbor," says he, "is like a dart, and a sword, and a sharp arrow whereby he ruins his neighbor, and kills his own soul." (Ver. 18.) Thirdly, "A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape." (Chap. xix.) Yes, without doubt; for though they escape in this world, they shall not in the next; though here they may lurk under their knavery, and shield themselves awhile from the power of men, all their tricks will never secure them from the hands of God.

Nay, moreover, in that law, which Almighty God gave to Moses, (Deut. xix. 19.) a false witness who is discovered to be so, is ordered to be condemned to the same punishment, which the fault deserved, of which he accused his brother, had he been really guilty, and the fact proved upon him.

Several nations punish this crime with death, as the French at this day, and the Romans formerly; who, in terror to others, cast them headlong down from the Tarpeian mount. The church, in her ancient canons, excommunicates false witnesses, and forbids them communion till their death, because, says the great council of Arles, (Arcalatense 1 Can. 14.) the scripture says, "A false witness shall not be unpunished." **Prov. xix.**

But, methinks, over and above all punishments in this life, it is truly terrible to consider, that by false witnesses, usually great injustices are occasioned, who, though they reap but small profit from their wickedness, are guilty of all the wrong, which is never to be forgiven till restitution be made. Whoever then has a sense of a future state must tremble at this thought.

But you may, dear Christians, in some measure be many ways guilty of this commandment. For, first, there is another kind of false swearing, and in an inferior degree, and yet often very criminal, and this happens frequently between man and man, neighbor and neighbor. And whensoever one accuses another falsely, lays a fault to his charge of which he is not guilty, out of a pique or quarrel, envy or hatred, or a motive of interest, and a desire to raise their own fortune, esteem, or advancement from the ruin of others; and this is a species of detraction we call calumny, and is truly a bearing false witness against our neighbor. The damage hereby occasioned, either in reputation or fortune, the detractor is obliged to repair. Rash judgments likewise, and groundless suspicions, are also a bearing of false witness against our neighbor in our minds; and though we do them no exterior injury in words or deeds, yet we wrong them in our own selves, and murder their reputation in our hearts.

A third sort of bearing false witness is by flattery, by commending people for what deserves no praise, or by exceeding all bounds in what deserves some commendation. This is what is directly opposite to the former, and yet many times more pernicious. There are a sort of people who aim to raise their own repute, and gain preferment by discommending and lessening others. And there are others, too, who design the same thing by praise and flattery, still commending those from whom they expect some favor, money, or preferment; or some way to make an interest by them, or a property of them. Thus they always find out some way to excuse their faults, and to praise what they ought to condemn; to make them easy in those evils they see

them incline to, and unwilling to leave: "The sinner is praised in the desires of his soul: and the unjust man is blessed;" (Psalm ix.) they give vice the name of virtue, as the prophet says, "call evil good, and good evil." Rashness they will term courage, and cowardice moderation. Revenge they will call a necessary defence; and Christian patience, meanness of spirit. Covetousness they will call economy, and flatter a prodigal's wasteful temper with the honor of being a generous man. They will disguise knavery and injustice under the title of a notable contrivance, and good management; and honor a saucy scurrilous fellow with the name of a jocose and pleasant man; and thus, as the prophet Hosea says, "They call up the sins of the people, and encourage what they ought to correct. My people, says Isaiah, they who call thee blessed, the same deceive thee, and undermine the ways of thy feet." And the royal prophet too was very sensible of this, as to his own person, where, in the hundred and fortieth psalm, he begs to be delivered from this danger: "The just man," says he, "will admonish me with charity, and reprehend me; but let not the sinner grease my head with the oil of flattery." Alas! if he does, he will never truly know himself, his worst failings will be glossed over, and a way found out to justify what is not likely to be amended.

The flatterers, and the flattered, are both in a dangerous state; against the first, God denounces, wo by his prophet Ezechiel, "Thus saith the Lord God, wo to them that sew cushions under every elbow, and make pillows for the heads of persons of every age to catch souls," (Chap. xiii. 18.) that is to ruin them.

Yes, there are those, says St. Gregory the Great, (L. Mor. 18. c. 4.) who "By commending or approving the ill deeds of others, augment what by reprehension they ought to endeavor to lessen; a cushion is laid under us to rest easier on; whoever therefore flatters another in evil, puts a pillow under his head, and a cushion under his arm, that he who ought to have been reprehended for his fault may by false praise rest easy upon it. And so it is said

again, says he, The sinner built a wall, and they smoothed it over with mortar; by the wall, says he, is understood the hardness of sin. To raise a wall then is to add sin to sin, which though it look rough to the eye, yet there are those found that will smooth it over with flattery, and make it agreeable. And what will be the end? Solomon tells us, (Prov. xvii. 15.) "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, both are abominable before God."

Now likewise those who are flattered in their evil ways, are not in a less dangerous condition; for though they have but too much reason to apprehend their state, yet they willingly incline to credit those who flatter their inclinations, and are glad they have other's judgment to justify what they do; these, as the same St. Gregory observes, are so deeply buried in sin, that they are seldom raised to life.

We read in the gospel of three dead persons whom our Saviour raised to life, and was told of a fourth by his disciples whom he did not raise again, because it is very hard, that he, who is flattered to the last in a long habit of sin, should be raised from the death of his understanding, to the light and life of grace; and therefore it is our Saviour says, *Let the dead bury their dead;* for then the dead bury the dead, when sinners commending and praising sinners in what is evil, cover and bury them under a heap of flattering words.

There is also another sort of flattery, and very pernicious, whereby evil minded people endeavor to draw an innocent person into great danger of his life or fortune, and speak him fair to trepan him the surer; thus Saul flattered David, when he designed to expose him to the swords and fury of the Philistines: "Here," says he, "is my eldest daughter Merob, her I will give thee to wife; behave but thyself like a brave man, and fight the battle of our Lord." (1 Reg. xiv.) And thus the crafty Jews addressed themselves to our Saviour (whom they designed to trepan) with a flattering preface: "Master," say they, "we know

that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth," &c. (Matt. xxii. 16.) No doubt, whensoever a flattering commendation is made use of to lead us into or set us upon, what may be a great prejudice to us, or our ruin; as it is very pernicious, so it cannot but be a great sin. And I think nothing can be more cruel than that mistaken kindness of friends and relations, who when those they love are brought to extremity by sickness, flatter them with hopes of recovery, bid them be cheerful and of good heart, assuring them there is no danger of death, to keep them from what they judge melancholy thoughts, the consideration of their future state; so are hurried to another world without any, or at most a very imperfect preparation.

A third kind of flattery is, when by great commendations of some natural perfection, or acquired qualification, the flatterer draws, or endeavors to draw another into sin. Praise and flattery are a secret poison, that sinks insensibly into the heart, there it weakens the strength and steadiness of virtue, and by degrees softens it into vice. It is but too natural to a weak mind to be taken with commendations and pleased with praise; and thereupon being unwilling to lose or displease their admirers, they comply with unreasonable desires, at the expense of virtue, and are flattered into ruin: "Catch us, the little foxes," says the spouse in the Canticle, "that destroy the vines." (Can. ii. 15.) These little foxes, according to St. Bernard, are flattering tongues that root up and destroy virtue in the heart.

A fourth sort of bearing false witness is, by telling of lies; for to lie, is to speak contrary to what we know, with a design to deceive; and therefore it is evidently a bearing of false witness.

There are three kinds of them, and some much worse than others; a jocose lie, an officious lie, and a pernicious lie. A jocose lie, is what is told out of mirth, or sport, and only to please the company for a moment, without prejudicing any. An officious lie is what is profitable to some, and prejudicial to none; such were the lies of the Egyptian midwives to king Pharaoh, to save

the male infants of the Israelites from being murdered. Inasmuch as these are lies, they are sins, because designedly contrary to truth; yet only small sins, because they do harm to none; nevertheless of these it is said in the thirteenth of Proverbs, v. 5. "The just shall hate a lying word." And as St. John says, "No lie can be from truth;" (1 Epist. ii.) but on the contrary, as our Saviour tells us by the same apostle, "The devil is the master and father of lies: you are of your father the devil," says he; he stood not in truth, because truth is not in him; when he telleth a lie, he speaks of his own, because he is a liar, and the father of lies.

A pernicious lie is what is prejudicial to our neighbor, or dishonors God and religion, or is scandalous; there are innumerable of these, out of malice or ill will, or when men lay the fault on one that is innocent, to excuse themselves or a friend that is guilty: or when to do one a kindness they prejudice another, and worse when they do harm to some, and good to none. In trading and dealings in the world there are abundance of these lies, and particularly when people demand unjust and deny just debts.

Of these lies it is said in the twelfth chapter of Proverbs: "That lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but they that deal faithfully please him." Of these again, it is said in the twenty-first chapter of Revelations: "But as to murderers, fornicators, witches, idolaters, and all liars, they shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." Ver. 8

As to lies that are told only for excusing themselves and others, sometimes they may be only officious lies, and then not very sinful; but often they are pernicious lies, and hinder superiors from knowing the truth, whereby offenders may be duly corrected, and such remedies applied, that faults may be amended. No doubt it is better to tell a lie than to betray an innocent person, or to do a greater mischief; because it is better to do the less evil than the greater, yet neither are justifiable

But to tell lies to excuse themselves, is to go to the devil for help, and to take shelter under his protection, for he is the father of lies. Besides, there is so great a meanness in telling a lie, that no person of honor will do it; and such an unworthiness as does not become a Christian, whose duty is rather to suffer a reproof, than ward it by such unwarrantable means. The same may be said of equivocations and mental reservations, &c. which are all designed to deceive.

A last sort of bearing false witness is by hypocrisy and dissimulation, for these are lies in actions, as the others are in words; when they are dishonorable to God, prejudicial to ourselves or neighbors, they are highly blameable.

You see here, dear Christians, what bearing false witness is, how great a sin, and what ties of restitution it brings upon those who entangle themselves in sins of injustice: you may observe also the various kinds of this sin, and how many ways one may bear false witness.

A Christian's duty is to avoid all those mean and unwarrantable ways, and to give evidence for truth, and nothing but the truth. It was for this Christ says to Pilate, (John xviii. 37.) he came into the world. To be his disciples, we must follow his steps; and therefore in all things let our heart and lips agree to speak what is fit, and always what is true; especially when we are upon oath: thus only can we hope for the enjoyment of eternal truth.

DISCOURSE II.

ON THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.—Exod. xx. 16.

You have seen, dear Christians, what it is to bear false witness, and how great a crime, and how many ways it may be committed;

but as there are no ways more common than by rash judgment, I shall therefore proceed to shew you what rash judgment is, and when committed.

Rash judgment, then, is committed as often as without sufficient evidence we judge to the prejudice of another. If the matter be evident, that is if we see a man commit a sin, though it may be slander to divulge it, yet there is no sin in concluding with ourselves that he has done amiss, for the sin is not in judging, but in passing a rash judgment, and condemning a person within ourselves, upon weak grounds, or mere suspicions; such as would not move a sober and considerate person to entertain an ill opinion of him, but rather to suspend his judgment till farther proof: so it is only the credibility of the motives whereupon we build our judgments, that justifies and excuses them from being rash. I know people are apt to be satisfied with the judgments they have passed, when what they judged proves true; and, on the contrary, suspect them to have been rash, when in effect it proves false. But this is a deceitful rule, because there are some very credible that prove false, as there are some incredible things that prove true.

This sin is greater or less, according as the matter whereupon we frame our judgments, and the grounds whereon they are framed are of greater or less moment; and then a mortal sin, when we judge another to be guilty of a mortal sin, with due reflection, and without sufficient evidence.

Our souls are in no small danger of ruin from these sins, because we are naturally very forward in judging others, and presume we have sufficient evidence, when in reality we have not; and the frequent discovery of past mistakes are no warning to some people to make them more cautious; but upon the next occasion they are as hasty and as positive in censuring others upon bare reports, and weak appearances, as if they never had been mistaken.

This sin never appears to the world, and is formed and nursed

only in our own breasts; for if we discover our rash judgments to others, they receive a new species, and become then detraction and slander: so when you say to yourself upon small appearances, or weak motives, such a one has committed a great sin, I am sure he is guilty; or no honest woman would do so or so; or, had he not been a knave, he would have done otherwise by me; I am sure they cannot do so and so without injustice; or, if you miss anything in your house, oh! such or such a one must have taken it, it can be no body else; or, in fine, when you hear of an injury done you, immediately you say to yourself, I am sure it was such a one, and they did it maliciously and on purpose; with an hundred such like, in all manner of sins, as different passions shall suggest. Now, as long as these thoughts are confined to our own breasts, and pass no farther, they are only rash judgments, but if they once break out of inclosure, and be discovered to others, though only your own family, they receive an additional malice, and become detraction.

But suppose they never take air, but die in your own breast, where they were bred, even so they are both injurious to your neighbor, and injurious to God; to your neighbor, because they murder his reputation in your breast, and destroy in you the good opinion you had of him, and as your esteem lessens, charity begins to relent and grows cold towards him: and, therefore, (says St. Augustin, De amicit. c. 24.) above all things take care you admit no suspicions into your mind, because they are the poison of friendship. And St. Bonaventure (In Stim. amoris. c. 10.) calls them a secret plague, but very dangerous, because they drive God from us, and tear in pieces fraternal charity. No doubt, our neighbor has a just title to our esteem, till he forfeits it, and this forfeiture appears by clear proofs. And charity also obliges us to entertain a favorable opinion of him, till apparent arguments evidence the contrary; and this also appears from the light of nature. You would not have another, without good reason, harbor an ill opinion of you; why should you then, upon less evidence,

harbor an ill opinion of another? Measure them by yourself, and let charity and justice over-rule your thoughts, and never let them go farther than you are sure the motives will warrant, and bear you out.

Besides this injustice and uncharitableness to our neighbor, rash judgments are also injurious to God; for by them we usurp that jurisdiction which he assures us he will grant to none. There are three things which Almighty God declares he reserves for himself, and communicates to none, to wit, his own honor, revenge, and judgment. Of the first he has assured us by Isaiah, "I, the Lord, (says he, c. xlii. 8.) this is my name, I will not give holy love to another." The second is delivered both in the Old and New Testament: "Brethren, (says St. Paul, Rom. xii. 19.) revenge not yourselves, nor yield to anger; for it is written, revenge is reserved to me; I will repay." And the third, viz., judgment, is expressed clearly by the same apostle in several places. I mean not all sorts of judgment, for God, no doubt, has given authority to the civil magistrate to judge and condemn malefactors, but only that judgment whereby men pretend to dive into the secrets of hearts, and to conclude from some outward appearances what the disposition is within; this he reserves to himself, as being the only searcher of hearts, for men's eyes are too weak to discover what passes in another's breast. And so St. Paul in the fourteenth chapter to the Romans: "Who are those, (says he, ver. 4.) that judgeth another man's servant. To his own Lord he standeth or falleth." And again to the Christians of Corinth: "Judge not before the time, till the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." Then every one shall be censured or justified by the evidence of their own hearts. The reason given by the apostle, why we should not judge, is, because the things whereon we pass our censures are hidden from us, and therefore very uncertain, and only clear to God, who sees through all pretences, and discovers truth, though hid in the

bottom of our hearts; whoever then takes upon him this office, usurps God's right, and infringes upon this prerogative.

Now, if it be criminal to judge ill of others, when there is some appearance of evil, is it not much worse to put an ill construction upon things, that in all appearance are good, and to persuade ourselves that they are done out of an ill intention, or for human respects, vanity, or the like? This is certainly to enter upon God's jurisdiction, and to pretend to know the secrets of hearts, and to judge of hidden thoughts. And by this means, as St. James says, "We become judges full of unjust thoughts." Or as Solomon expresses it, "It is to be like those who divine, and by vain conjectures would know what they are really ignorant of."

To judge aright of others in the tribunal of our own hearts, we should follow, as near as we can, the method used in courts of judicature; there none are condemned till they be heard, till the witnesses and proofs on both sides are duly examined; till each circumstance which may render the fact probable or improbable, be well weighed, before sentence be given. We should observe these rules before we censure others; we should hear what they can say for themselves, how they relate the matter, and what they can allege in their own justification, before we pass our judgment. Daily experience is enough to convince us that truth can never be had from one side, there is so much malice, partiality, or mistake, at least in ordinary reports, that he must be of a very weak judgment who builds upon them, and believes that truth can never be had from relations that are usually modelled by passion, interest, or prejudice.

It is enough to give us confusion, to consider that Almighty God himself, infinite as he is in knowledge, and to whom nothing can be hid, though he saw the sin of our first parents, heard what the serpent proposed to Eve, what Eve said to Adam, and how both behaved themselves, yet for all that, he asked each of them apart, *Why didst thou do this?* and this doubtless not for want of information, but to caution us not to be too forward in censur-

ing others, or to let reports or bare appearances move us to settle judgment in their disfavor, till we have heard from their mouths what they can say in their own defence, or what rational account they can give of their proceedings. Again, in the eleventh chapter of Genesis, v. 5, when the sons of Adam went about to build the tower of Babel, and to raise a proud monument that should reach heaven, God knew what they designed, as well as what they did. Now, what does the scripture say? The sacred text tells us, (v. 21.) that God came down to see the city and the tower before he dispersed the people, and changed their language.

In the eighteenth chapter of the same book, when the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah's wickedness grew louder and louder as their sins increased, "I will go down, (says Almighty God,) and see whether they have completed, in fact, the cry that comes to me." If God himself, who has made our bodies and souls, and cannot but know all their motions, observes nevertheless this method, with what face can we pretend, upon small appearances, to judge of the interior of our neighbor, and condemn him within ourselves? If he, to whom alone is reserved the knowledge of hearts, and who sounds their bottom, comes down to see and know before he judges and condemns; how rash must we be, to pass sentence on others, before we see, or know, or have heard both sides, and know what the person censured can say in his own defence? We, to whom all things are obscure, and nothing manifest, to whom all is doubtful, and little evident, to whom all is dark, and little appears to the open day; God's example in this sure should be our caution.

If a report then is not a sufficient ground for the building of a rational judgment, sure we may judge when we see evil with our eyes, and hear it with our ears. I have seen this man, or that young woman, in a scandalous place at unseasonable hours, and in company with those of no good repute: I have heard of many ill things this man has done, that he has taken what was

not his own, and have seen the stolen goods found about him, and such like; certainly, there is no rashness in judging these to be ill people. It may be, there is not, generally speaking; but people usually go much farther than the motives they have will bear them out; they see something, and they judge much worse; they see a mole hill, and they suspect a mountain to be behind it; they see some indiscreet or indecent passage, and they imagine it is attended by the worst of evils; nay, sometimes the most virtuous actions are censured for the greatest wickedness; a few examples will make my meaning clear.

Should you see a handsome young widow put off all her mourning, and adorn herself to the best of her skill, with all the finery art or nature could afford, and then to go visit and converse with a lascivious general all alone in his tent day after day. What would you have judged of her? How would you have censured her reputation? What good design can she possibly have? And yet the fair and virtuous Judith did this, and was extremely innocent. She was so far from doing amiss, that the scripture tells us, Almighty God added to her a particular grace and comeliness, over and above what she received from all her rich and gay attire. She had no ill, but a good intention to deliver her country by the killing of Holofernes, and her just design was blessed with success.

Had you seen Joseph, the patriarch's son, running out of his mistress's chamber, as the scripture relates, and heard her cry out, and accusing him of a designed rape; what would you have judged of him? How many reasons would have occurred to you, and convinced you of his guilt? And yet he was far from deserving that censure; he was accused, because he was innocent, and condemned to prison, though he deserved better treatment.

Had you been present when the same Joseph sent his servants after his brothers, to whom he had sold some corn, to search for a silver cup, which, he said, he suspected some of them to have stolen; and when found in Benjamin's sack, would not you have

judged him to have been a thief? and yet he was innocent though he could not prove his innocence, the cup being put there by another hand, without his knowledge. Or, in fine, had you been in the court at Susanna's trial, and heard the two grave elders of the city swearing positively against her, would not you have judged her guilty, as those upon the bench did? Yet upon the rehearing of her cause, and the examination of their testimonies apart, these grave witnesses were found to be malicious slanderers, and she a virtuous lady.

These are so many examples the scripture has recorded for our caution, never to be too hasty in judging and censuring others: for I am persuaded people seldom have better or more apparent grounds to build their judgment upon than these. Can you have better reasons to go upon and censure others, than those who saw Judith so adorned, and so free with Holofernes? than those who heard Potiphar's wife cry out, and Joseph run away? than those who saw the silver cup taken out of Benjamin's sack? or heard the evidence given by the grave elders at Susanna's trial? All these were false. What assurances then can we have of the truth of our judgments, when we go upon less apparent grounds?

I will only add one instance more in the persons of the proud pharisee and the humble publican. The pharisee saw the publican at the bottom of the church with his eyes to the ground, his hand knocking his breast, and his heart, in all probability raised to heaven. What did he say? Lord, I give thee thanks, that I am not an extortioner, an unjust man, or an adulterer, as that publican below me. Had not this pharisee's heart been thoroughly corrupted, he would have said to himself; see there a good creature, one who seems to have the true spirit of a penitent; how truly humble and sensible of his fault! He seems to have great confusion for his past sins; revenges them on himself, by knocking his breast, and sues for pardon with an humble and contrite heart. And this is the real truth; but he makes quite another judgment; because he had been once a publican, he

judges him to be one still. Do you see that hypocrite, says he to himself; he dares not lift up his eyes to heaven, but his hands are open enough when there is a bribe to be had, or any thing to be extorted from the poor; he begs for mercy of God, but he has no mercy for others; wo be to those who fall into his hands, and have to do with him; he knocks his breast, but it is as hard as iron to his neighbor's wants; to see him in this posture who would not take him for an humble and honest man, and yet you shall soon see him in lewd company, and put on another air; he gets to the bottom of the temple, but it is only to observe others, and to cloak his pride under the appearance of humility, as most successful knaves cover their villainy under the mask of religion and piety.

This construction the rash pharisee makes; but Almighty God gives us another idea of the man, and tells us, that he departed justified, whilst his bold censurer was condemned for pride and rash judgment. What would the pharisee have said of him, had he seen him come to the top of the temple, and have taken place of him? Had he seen him in a careless posture, and, instead of praying, gazing about, and observing all that past?

The humble publican judges not so hardly of the pharisee; he looked into himself, and saw enough of his own, not to trouble himself with other folk's faults; he had time little enough to implore mercy for himself, to lose any in the censorious examin of other's lives, who were not under his care. If he observed any faults in the pharisee, they put him in mind of more of his own, which, as they gave him greater confusion, they increased his humility; so he departed justified, and the censorious pharisee condemned.

St. Francis of Sales, in his chapter of rash judgment, (Part III. chap. 28.) advises us never to judge at all; and, indeed, there is nothing got by it, but the gratifying of a censorious humor. No doubt, though we judge none, yet we may take as much precaution, be as much upon our guard, and arm ourselves against

any fear of surprise or damage in all our dealings with others as if they were rogues; and this is only prudence, and the best means to prevent inconveniences.

What are the causes of rash judgment? St. Thomas (ii. 2. q. 60. 2, 3.) assigns three. The first is the depraved disposition in him that judges; because he is conscious of his own frailty and wickedness, he upon small appearances imagines others are as ill. The Spaniards have a proverb that confirms this rule: *Piensa el Ladron que todos son de su condicion:* a robber believes every one to be a thief. And the scripture says as much of an idiot: "A fool upon the road believes all he meets to be fools like himself." (Eccles. x. 3.) The corruption of our hearts perverts our judgment, and we weigh our neighbor's actions in our own false scales. To those who look through colored spectacles, red, green, or yellow, all things they see seem red, green, or yellow; so those who look at others through their own passions, make them look like themselves. Pride made the pharisee judge ill of, and look contemptibly upon the publican. Pride makes us see a mote in another's eye, when we cannot observe a beam in our own. Some love to dwell on another's imperfections, to take afterwards a greater gust in their own supposed qualifications; and this seems also the pharisee's case. And some flatter themselves, and calm all remorse, by thinking others as wicked as themselves, in those things wherein they are most failing; others are forward in judging, to be thought wise, and to understand mankind. Some again are of a harsh and rough nature, and as the prophet Amos says, "turn judgment into wormwood;" generally judging their neighbor with bitterness and rigor. In fine, knaves are apt to judge others to be unjust, and all vice generally measures others by itself.

Secondly. Rash judgments proceed from the ill disposition of our heart towards another, from envy, jealousy, or some secret aversion; for as we easily believe what we would have, so, where we have a dislike, we find something to blame in all they do, and

interpret their actions in the worst sense, if we have never so little light to give color to the construction we make; for as we take all in good part that is done by our friends, and we find a hundred excuses to palliate and lessen the faults of those we love and affect, (unless where jealousy intervenes,) so we usually find as many reasons to censure and condemn the actions of those we do not affect: so the same action, with the same circumstances, shall appear different in those we have, or have no kindness for; so we commonly say, some had better steal than others look over the hedge.

The third cause of rash judgment is a long experience. Because we have known persons to have been ungodly a long time, we judge them to be always so. Upon this account the pharisee judged ill of the publican; because he had been a sinner, he judged him so still. And thus, Simon, another pharisee, censured the penitent Magdalen; because she had led an ill life, he judged she still persevered in the same, notwithstanding the visible signs of amendment. Besides these three causes—

Some judge ill upon silly and superstitious motives. Thus, when the people of Malta saw a viper hanging about St. Paul's hand, (Acts xxviii. 3, 4, 5, 6.) they judged him to be a murderer; and upon his flinging it off, and receiving no harm, they judged him to be a God.

The first remedy against this sin, is generally to suspend our judgments till further evidence, as we usually do when our friends are concerned. Be not too hasty you cry, let us hear what they can say for themselves. Though the matter appears but ill, you know not how it will be represented by the other party. And to do this we have a powerful motive, from the promise of Christ, set down in St. Luke, (vi. 37.) "Judge not, and you shall not be judged; condemn not, and you shall not be condemned."

How great is God's goodness to put our judgment in our own hands, and to engage himself not to enter into judgment with us, provided we judge not others! Censure not, therefore, with

harshness, and without compassion, even when the fault is evident; but consider human frailty, and what we ourselves might have done, had the same temptation assaulted us in the like circumstance. We are generally too apt to blame vice in others, and ready enough to give it quarter, and excuse worse in ourselves. Certainly it is a great unkindness to provoke the divine vengeance against ourselves, through our harshness to our neighbor, when we may render our judge favorable to us, by our sweetness and compassion towards others.

Secondly. If our pride (as it is but too often) be the occasion of our judging rashly, as it was in the pharisee, let us check it by a profound humility, calling to mind that the humble publican, after all his sins, went justified out of the temple: whilst the censorious pharisee was condemned with all his virtue, his prayers, his fasts, his alms, &c. When we judge others by ourselves, and measure their wickedness by the corruption of our own heart, it is pride certainly holds the scales of justice. Were we truly humble, we should be charitable; and charity never thinks evil; were we truly humble, the appearance of other's faults would be only so many monitors to us, to put us in mind of our own. Were we truly humble, we should find business and confusion enough in our own consciences, like the publican, without busying our heads with others. It is an idle curiosity, the daughter of pride, that puts us upon the examination of other's behavior, unless we have the charge of others upon our hands, as children, servants, and the like. Then, indeed, it is our duty to have a watchful eye over them; because we are accountable to God for their behavior, as St. Paul assures us.

Thirdly. We must not build too much upon appearances, especially when the person we are inclined to censure in our own minds, has hitherto the repute of honesty, and untainted reputation. The innocency of Judith, of Joseph, of Susannah, of Benjamin, and thousands of others, are warning enough to check

our forwardness, in presuming we have sufficient evidence, when in reality we have not.

The last advice is to frame as many excuses for every one we are tempted to censure, as we usually do for our friends when the case is theirs. If you cannot possibly deny the fact, excuse the intention, believe it proceeded out of ignorance, surprise, or inadvertence, &c., or what comes home to us all, make as favorable a construction of others, as you would have them make of you, in that or the like circumstance.

As to suspicions, they are generally venial, or more pardonable sins, at least when they go no farther than our own thoughts, as St. Augustin and St. Thomas teach, and justified also upon less appearances. Clearer proofs being necessary to warrant a positive judgment than a suspicion; for while we only suspect, we do not destroy our neighbor's reputation within us, but only lessen it. Besides, they are occasioned rather through constitution and temper than malice. As to doubtful actions, where the motives on both sides are equal, and we have as many and convincing reasons to think them good, as we have to judge them bad; these we are obliged to take, and interpret in the most favorable sense; for if we will judge, we ought to judge well of others, till we have sufficient evidence to the contrary.

Here, dear Christians, I have given you a clear and full account of the sin of rash judgment, its causes, and its remedies. Be careful, then, to censure none, at least without sufficient evidence, apparent and convincing reasons. Remember what Christ says: "Judge not, and you shall not be judged." (Luke vi. 37.) And be cautious also to give no occasion to others to censuring you. Thus, instead of doing yourself and them a prejudice, you will contribute to save theirs, as well as your own souls.

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE NINTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS.

Thou shalt not desire thy neighbor's wife: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.—Exod. xx. 17.

By the five last mentioned commandments, that regard our neighbor, Almighty God, as it were by so many ramparts, protects our lives and fortunes from any unjust invasion, and provides that we be no ways injured in our person, reputation, or goods. Now, by these two last commandments, which conclude the decalogue, he takes care we injure not ourselves. For though by evil desires only we do not usually prejudice our neighbor, since they neither break bones, nor rob him of his goods, yet we much prejudice ourselves; for thereby robbing ourselves of grace and innocence, like self-murderers, we bring death and ruin upon our own souls.

Besides, these commandments are also as a strong barrier for our neighbor's security: for the remoter we are from wishing him any evil, or what may be to his prejudice, the farther we are from doing it; and such as do not covet his goods will never rob him of them. They strike at the root of all our corrupt inclinations: and if punctually observed, would quite extirpate the evil.

In these two last precepts we find the desires of evil to be forbid; and particularly such as relate to impurity and injustice. "Thou shalt not desire thy neighbor's wife: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods." And are not the desires of other sins forbid as well as these? Yes, no doubt; for they have no privilege above these, and are never lawful to be done. Thus, as we cannot lawfully commit murder, so we cannot without a crime, desire any one's death; and as we ought not to bear false witness, so we cannot intend or design to do it.

Why are not then the desires of other sins as expressly forbid

as these? The reason is, because we are much more inclined to these, than to any of the others. There is a great propensity in nature to sins of impurity, and a strange eagerness after riches; but we are not so prone to murder, to perjury, or to bear false witness: we naturally have a horror of these crimes; and it is usually a covetous humor that promotes and leads us into such wickedness. It was therefore, very proper, that the desires of these sins, which meet with so much encouragement from a corrupt nature, should be expressly forbid, that the actions might be utterly banished, and not so much as thought on.

Concupiscence, in the largest sense, or depraved desires, are the great incentives to vice; we commit no evil, but out of the desire either of pleasure, of money, or of honor. And so St. John expresses it, "All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life." 1 Epist. ii. 16.

The desire of what others have, and a repining at their prosperity, causes envy; and envy leads to detraction, calumny, rash judgment, &c. Nor is there any false witness, treachery, or the like, but what is usually procured by money. Or tell me, what is it that sets people upon attempting privately another's life? Is it not with greater security to get what they have, or to remove an obstacle to their pleasure or honor? The same reason moves children to slight their parents, to hate them, or wish their deaths. Is it not the desire of gain, that makes some people employ a greater part of Sundays and holidays in servile work? Or a love of pleasure that moves others to invert and mispend those festivals? In fine, it is usually one of those passions that takes careless Christians off from the service of God, and extinguishes charity.

Were then the desires that are forbid by these two last commandments banished our hearts, we might with ease keep the other eight. It was then with great reason Almighty God gave us a double precept to suppress them.

There are three degrees in sins of thought, and all mortal sins in weighty matters. First, a simple, yet voluntary complaisance, or pleasure in what is evil. Secondly, a desire of the evil. Thirdly, a contriving or going about to commit the evil. A simple complaisance is, when a person takes delight, and voluntarily pleases himself with thinking on some sinful object, without either desiring or designing to commit the wickedness that pleases him by any exterior action. A desire goes farther and is completed, when a person not only takes delight in what is sinful, but also wishes he had the opportunity, convenience, or such a concurrence of circumstances, that he might commit it. A contriving of the evil is, when he uses ways and means, and goes about to execute the evil desires of his heart. Each of these three degrees, I say, are mortal sins; the first least wicked, and the last most criminal.

These may happen in any sin whatever, and against any of the commandments of God, but most usually in sins of impurity, injustice, revenge and pride. In sins of impurity, amongst such as are wantonly inclined, there are those who content themselves with entertaining the thoughts that are agreeable to corrupt nature, without desiring to execute them, not for the fear of God, but upon some human respects, the fear of what may be the consequence. Others are bolder in wickedness, and not only please themselves with the thoughts of it, but desire to commit it; but yet are not so bent upon it, as to contrive the execution. And still there are those who have cast off the shame of the world, as well as the fear of God, and aim at nothing more than to satisfy the desires of their hearts, so seek occasions to complete them.

As to sins of injustice in thought, they may be committed when a person has in his eye a considerable advantage, or a way to make his fortune, though unwarrantably, and to the prejudice of others, yet he is pleased with the unjust proposal; and seldom stops here, but is carried to wish and desire what suits so much with his interest, though not with his conscience; and having

mastered all sense of right and wrong, he makes it his business to contrive and compass his unjust designs whilst he sees a fair opportunity.

In revenge, when he takes delight and pleases himself in the evil that befalls, or may befall his enemy, or such as he does not affect. And he becomes more criminal, when in his heart he wishes some mischief, misfortune, disappointment, or that some evil may fall upon them, or that he may not prosper in what he undertakes; or worst of all when he contrives and designs some mischief against him, &c.

They sin in pride, when, like Lucifer, they take a vain complaisance in themselves, for some perfection or qualification they seem to have. From this they go a step farther, and desire to be esteemed by others for what they value in themselves; and, in fine, have many indirect contrivances to gain esteem and applause. The like may be said of all other sins, wherein persons ought carefully to examine themselves.

I am satisfied there are many in a double ignorance as to sins of thought. First, they either take them to be no sins, unless they be followed by actions; or secondly, if they do, they imagine they are not near so criminal as the sins of action. For example, a person out of sloth designs to miss mass upon a Sunday or holiday; or what is the same, resolves upon some impertinent business or diversion, that is inconsistent with his obligation, but afterwards repenting himself of his wicked resolution, puts all by and carefully hears mass; that done, he never dreams of any fault he has committed. Had he really missed mass as he intended, he would have thought himself guilty of a great fault, but only resolving to miss, and not missing, he troubles not his head with the apprehensions of a crime: and the like in other sins, where people resolve upon the wickedness, but change their minds before the execution, and comply with their duty. No doubt, dear Christians, it is better to comply late, than not at all; yet, however, that very moment he consented to omit his duty, or

took pleasure in, or designed to do what in itself was criminal, that same moment he committed a mortal sin, continued in the evil disposition, the greater his, and the longer the crime.

Besides, you must not imagine that sins of thought are much less criminal than sins of action; for the whole essential malice of sin is completed in the soul, that is, in the will, which is its sole free power to do good and evil, and only can offend; the exterior action is but the execution of what the will has resolved upon, and already consented to. Those who make any other judgment of sin, erroneously measure the greatness of it by what in reality is no sin at all; they weigh its enormity by the infamy, shame, or worldly inconveniencies it brings upon the offender; thus sins of action would be great, and those of thought none at all. But these are false weights, and in themselves no fault, but only the consequences of a fault.

But we must judge of sin by the opposition it has to the will of God, and the eternal shame and miseries it draws upon both soul and body. Now, it is our will only that can oppose the will of God, because free in its choice to obey or disobey, to submit to, or oppose his divine will; and therefore, it is by sins of thought that we offend God, and rob our souls of all that is valuable in heaven or earth, of God himself.

Whilst we live in innocence, and in the state of grace, our souls are the temples of the Holy Ghost; God himself dwells therein; but we no sooner consent to an evil thought, that is, a mortal sin, (and all such are mortal sins of action) I say, the will no sooner consents, but that very moment the Holy Ghost is expelled, and forsakes that soul, and at the same time the devil enters in and takes possession. By losing God we lose all that is desirable, we lose our title to heaven, and the kind and fatherly protection of our God. By receiving the devil, we gain as just a title to hell as any damned soul that is there. Then we are no more the children of God, and heirs of bliss, but the slaves of hell, and liable to an eternity of miseries; and if death sur

prises us in that deplorable state, we are lost for ever, without hopes of ever seeing the face of God, or ever being released from the extremity of endless woes.

It is true, we are made of body and soul, but our soul is the far nobler part, whereby we are raised above sensitive animals, and even capable to know, love, and enjoy God! It is, therefore, from the affections of this soul to or against him, according or contrary to his will, that he measures our merit, or our guilt. As our thoughts appear not to the world, so they neither create shame to us, nor damage to our neighbor; but being clear and open to the eyes of God, who is the searcher of hearts, he sees and approves of the good, and hates the evil disposition of our wills and cannot but punish what he hates.

But to descend from generals to particulars, let us consider what desires are forbid by each of those commandments we now speak of. By the ninth, *Thou shalt not desire thy neighbor's wife.* By this, in the first place, are forbid, not only all desires of adultery, but also under this head are prohibited all manner of impure thoughts or representations, in regard of any person whatever; and, in a word, all carnal delight, either in regard of themselves or others, except only in the state of marriage, and which is limited, and allowed to their own wives and husbands only; for if they give liberty to their thoughts to wander, and fix upon any other person at any time, no doubt they transgress this commandment; and not only by desires, but also by a voluntary complaisance in the impure representation or thought.

Secondly. It is forbid to desire our neighbor's wife, not only in a wicked way, as I have said, but also to desire to have her in a lawful marriage; because this cannot be effected but by a dissolution of the present marriage, which amongst Christians cannot be but by the death of the husband. To desire her then in marriage, is in effect to wish her husband's death. Besides, were these desires permitted, they would lead naturally to adultery, or murder, and sometimes both, and it may be, happen but

too often in the world. Since we find it in King David, who, after he had desired Uriah's wife, not only fell into adultery, but likewise murdered her husband.

There was more reason for this prohibition, upon some account in the old law, than in the new, because then it was permitted the husband upon a dislike, to turn away his lawful wife, and she thus dismissed, might marry another husband. So those who desired other men's wives, solicited them to be morose, uneasy, and disobliging to their hasbands; thus to give an occasion to a divorce, that so they might afterwards enjoy them in marriage. What is said here of desiring another's wife, is understood of coveting another's husband for the same reason.

Thirdly. It is also unlawful to desire those in marriage, whom they know to be already betrothed, or promised in marriage to another; for as neither party thus espoused can lawfully depart from their promise, but upon a mutual release, so it is not lawful to desire to marry any one who is under that obligation.

In fine, it is criminal to desire in marriage a person that is consecrated to God by solemn vow or profession; for this spiritual marriage can never be dissolved, and therefore, in all circumstances, it cannot but be an injury to the divine spouse.

As to the tenth and last commandment, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods*, it is plain all desiring of what belongs to others is expressly forbid, unless it be in a lawful way, as by buying it at a just price with the free consent of the owner, and the like. It is certain every one ought to be content with his present circumstances, with what God has bestowed upon him, or what he can justly claim by his industry, or any lawful means, without injuring any. As long as we have meat, drink, and clothes, with these we ought to be content; for they that desire to be rich, fall into temptation and the snares of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and perdition. For, "The root of all evil," says St. Paul, "is covetousness." Whenever our desires go beyond

the bounds of necessity and inconvenience, though in a lawful way, no doubt we give way to a corrupt, and (it may be) the most dangerous inclination of our nature. For first, all other passions are sometimes satisfied, at least for a time, but this never; for the more people have, the more they would have. This is one of the daughters of the insatiable leech Solomon mentions in his Proverbs, (chap. xxx. 15.) that cries continually, *Bring, bring*, and is never content with all that is brought. Secondly, all other corrupt inclinations decay, and are lessened with time and age; but this improves and increases with years, and unless mastered by virtue in time, never dies but with us: and then, as St. Paul says, plunges us into perdition. Thirdly, other vices appear like themselves, and have the countenance of evil, and are known by it; so when through frailty men yield to them, they do amiss, and often repent for it and amend. But covetousness disguises itself, and puts on the mask of virtue, and appears in the dress of moderation, temperance, frugality, providence, and a hundred such like; so those who are really guilty of it, hardly know it, but willingly mistake it for a virtue. For what covetous man is there that believes he is covetous? And thus they live, and thus they die, and so are insensibly, as I may say, plunged into perdition.

Secondly. They break this commandment, who desire to steal, cheat, over-reach, or any way to injure their neighbor. So he who desires or designs to cheat a private person, or the public; he who intends to rob, or commit sacrilege; who aims to cheat in weight, measure, or reckoning; in buying, selling, gaming, &c., who desire to buy stolen goods, or to keep to themselves what they accidentally find; who are desirous to make an advantage of the ignorance, inadvertence, indiscretion, or necessity of a seller, and so to have goods at an under rate; who are unwilling to pay just debts, or desire to borrow more than they can pay; who unwillingly discharge the duties of their respective employments, and never care to be faithful in what they have undertaken

and are paid for, but when forced, or over-awed to it, with many more of the like nature, all break this commandment.

Where people do an ill thing once, they may be intended, designed, or desired to do it an hundred times, and yet have no scruple, where their designs had not the effect: where they cheat once in gaming, they intend it often, and yet trouble their heads as little with their evil designs, as if God saw not into their hearts.

Thirdly. They break this commandment, who, for their own gain and advantage, wish calamities and inconveniences to another. Thus sin all those, who wish for scarcity of things, and dearness of provisions, because they have a quantity to sell. Secondly—Those also sin grievously, who wish others to be in a pressing want, that they may make a property of them, either in selling to them what they want, or buying of them what they must part with. Thirdly—Who wish for war, to enhance commodities to an extraordinary rate; and thus also soldiers sin, who wish for it to have the conveniency of plunder. Fourthly—Those physicians sin, who wish for a sickly time, because it will prove their harvest and lawyers who wish for contentions and law-suits, because they fill their pockets. Fifthly—All those traders sin, who endeavor to monopolise goods, that they may sell them again at their own rate; and who grieve at plenty, and the number of sellers whereby commodities, especially necessaries for life and subsistence, grow cheaper. In fine, all those break this commandment, who wish their own gain and advantage, through other people's wants, losses, or damage; for all these are evidently against charity.

Fourthly, and lastly. They break this commandment, who too eagerly desire and keep their own; who become very uneasy, and much troubled at every accident or loss; this shews they set their hearts upon what they have, contrary to the command of God. "If riches abound, set not your heart upon them," says the divine psalmist. (Psalm lxi. 11.) And they also sin grievously, who live as if they had lost all confidence in providence, and seem to

place more security in money, than in God's provision. And thus they invert all order, and become men of riches, as the scripture terms them, and not the riches of men.

You see, dear Christians, how we sin by thoughts as grievously, in a manner, as by actions, in the sight of God; and how many ways you may offend against the ninth commandment. *Thou shalt not desire thy neighbor's wife.* And how many ways against the tenth, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods, his ox, his ass, his house, or his servant;* which is understood not only of slaves, but of hired servants; these we are not to desire contrary to our neighbor's inclination or convenience, as is expressed in the catechism of the council of Trent.

We should look upon all those things which God forbids, as if they were impossible, and then we should never desire them; for though they be not so in reality, yet, if we commit them, we know it is impossible to avoid the vengeance of God. "Alas!" as St. Paul says, "the time is short, it remaineth that they who have wives, be as if they had none; they that weep, as though they wept not; they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away." (1 Cor. vii.) And concludes, "I would have you to be without solicitude." Again he tells us, "The desire of riches leads into the devil's snare, and into damnation." It is also the command of our Saviour, to renounce all we have, in affection, if we will follow him. "He that will come after me, let him renounce his father and mother, his wife, his children, and all that he has, that he may love God alone, and his creatures only in him, and for him." We must, therefore, moderate all our desires, excepting those of pleasing and serving God, which, if regular, can never be too eager, the improvement whereof is what we ought daily to endeavor.

THE CONCLUSION, OR FINAL DISCOURSE.

HAVING finished the explanation of the Ten Commandments, wherein I have shewn you the most important duties of a Christian, and the most usual failings to which we are subject, I shall conclude in laying before you the root of all our miscarriages in the practice of virtue, and what insensibly leads us into all those evil practices, of which each finds himself guilty, which is the love of ourselves. As it is an advanced step towards a cure, to know the real and true cause of the distemper, for then proper remedies may be applied; so it is no small help to virtue, and the keeping of God's commandments, to know what is the real cause of our breaking of them, that we may, by proper means, root it out of our hearts.

No doubt, dear Christians, self-love is a great sin; because, as our Saviour says, it is the eternal ruin of our souls: "He that loveth his life, (says he,) shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal." (John xii. 25.) But not to alarm pious souls to no purpose with unreasonable apprehensions, we must distinguish two sorts of the love of ourselves: the one, according to nature, directed by reason and charity; the other, according to our corrupted nature, governed by passion.

The first is commendable, and a virtue, and it is of this our Saviour speaks, when he assigns it for the model we must follow in loving our neighbor: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* This love, I say, is commendable and innocent; for what is given us as a rule to work out our salvation by, cannot but be such.

The second sort of the love of ourselves, which is built upon the corrupt inclinations of our nature, and the pernicious maxims of the world, moves us to refer all to ourselves; and in all we say and do, to look no farther than our own interest or pleasure, or some vain and worldly ends: of this it is Christ says, "He

that loveth his life shall lose it;" and, therefore, it cannot but be a great sin.

This love, in some, is a vain and ambitious inclination, that does all, not for God's honor and glory, but their own; not to please him, but themselves; in others, it is an interested and mercenary love, that is not at all concerned what others suffer in their liberty, in their rest, in their goods, their reputation, or the like, provided they find their account in it. Sometimes it is a politic kind of love, that is altogether governed by worldly respects, and so makes all serve to this end. Other times it is a sensual love, and seeks only its own ease and pleasure; and though to come at this it often meets with difficulties, yet these difficulties are pleasures when they drive at, and contribute to gain the end they aim at. In fine, it is self-love, when they endeavor to gratify some corrupt inclination of their own, though at the expense of their neighbor's reputation, interest, ease, or convenience; or when they are uneasy and troubled at every disappointment, when matters succeed not according to their wish. This self-love is not only a sin in itself, but also the root and cause of most, if not all the sins we commit: "for all seek their own," says St. Paul, "and not what is Jesus Christ."

As to this self-love, let us, with no small apprehension, see and observe what Christ has delivered to us in the gospel. Of all the instructions this divine master has given us upon this subject, I shall only observe to you one, which is set down by two evangelists, St. Matthew and St. Luke. Christ said unto all, says St. Luke, "If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke ix. 23.) St. Matthew repeats the same. (Matt. xvi. 24.) From these clear and express words of our Saviour, I shall make two or three reflections.

First. We must follow Christ: "He that will come after me," says the Saviour of our souls. To follow him, dear Christians, it is not to walk step by step after him, but to imitate him in his

life and actions; to practice what he teaches, and to do what he does. As therefore, those, who observe what he has commanded, cannot but be agreeable to him, and live in the state of grace; so those who regard not what he taught, nor follow what he practised, cannot but remain in the state of sin.

Now, to follow Christ, the first thing that is to be done, (for no doubt there are a great many others that depend upon this,) the first thing, I say, is to renounce ourselves; "let him deny himself;" that is, in what we do, we must forget ourselves, we must distrust ourselves, we must despise ourselves, and, in a word, we must oppose all the corrupt inclinations of our nature; which, in reality, are general, though often with a greater bent to one thing than another. Whoever, therefore, suffers this self-love to live, to act, and to rule in their hearts, follow not Christ, and not following him, they cannot but remain in sin.

You will pray, (you say,) you will fast, you will give alms, and you will mortify yourself; all this is very good, but you are not to begin here; you may fast, and still follow your own inclinations, and your fast will not be acceptable to God; because, as the prophet says, in your fast is found your own will. And the same self-love may have its share in, and accompany your prayers, your alms, and your mortifications. The first thing then that you are to do, that every thing else may be acceptable to God, is to mortify your disorderly inclinations, and to oppose self-love in all its ways. If this were not necessary, I would tell you, gratify your inclinations, follow the affections of your heart, and seek yourself in all you do. Yes, but since Christ has declared the contrary, and assured us, that to come after him is to renounce ourselves; and since his orders are set down, word by word, by two faithful evangelists, two faithful secretaries, St Matthew and St. Luke, we cannot doubt of the truth.

But to whom did Christ say this? It may be, it was only to his apostles, or to some few chosen ones, whom he designed to raise to some eminent degree of perfection. Though St. Matthew

does not resolve this query, yet St. Luke expressly declares he spoke it to all, *Dicebat enim ad omnes*, (chap. ix. 23.) to all persons, by what state, quality, or condition soever they are distinguished; to the married and unmarried, to the poor and to the rich; to the great ones, as well as those of a meaner condition; to the sick and to the healthful, to young and old. It is to all, says St. Augustin, (Hom. 47. de divers.) without distinction, that he speaks: the married cannot say, it is to you, virgins, that he speaks, and not to us. The laity cannot say, it is to you, churchmen, that he delivers this precept, and not to us; it is you he obliges to renounce yourselves, we have our liberty to follow our inclinations. No; Christ speaks to all, without exception of persons, without privilege of condition, or without distinction of sex or state. He said unto all, "If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." It was to the whole world he spoke, all must renounce themselves, and fight against the corrupt inclinations of their nature.

We may likewise make a third reflection, and it will not be an impertinent remark on these words, "If any one will come after me." He that says, *if*, seems to doubt of the good-will or disposition of another; he that says, *if*, seems to leave us to our liberty; he that says, *if*, seems to put a condition, "if any one will come after me." Lord, do you doubt of our will? Is it not you that call upon the lame to heal them, the sick to cure them, the sorrowful to comfort them, the oppressed to ease them, and the miserable to give them relief? Will any one refuse to come to you? No, dear Christians.

But it is one thing to come to Christ, and another to come after Christ. To go to Christ, is to go to glory, but to go after Christ is to go to ignominy; to go to him, is to go to pleasure, but to go after him, is to go to sorrow; to go to him, is to go to a crown; to go after him, is to go to a battle, and to fight; to go to him, is to receive the reward of our labors; but to go after

him, is to bear our cross: that we may receive the reward. Christ then has reason to say, "If any one will come after me," for the number, I fear, is but small that truly desire to follow him; and, therefore, says not, if *many* but *if any one will follow me:* he forces none, but leaves all to their liberty to follow, or not to follow him, to love, or not to love him. And if there be any one who resolves to go after him, that he may at last come to him, there is a condition to which he must submit; what is that? He must renounce himself, and take up his cross daily; for as we daily carry a corrupted nature about with us, we have daily trials and occasions, wherein we must renounce and oppose it; and it is only by this renouncing, this abandoning, this sacrifice of ourselves, that we can work out our salvation; this is the abridgment of the whole gospel, and all Christianity, and our whole duty in miniature. But would you know the reason of this, why we are to renounce ourselves? I will tell you, dear Christians.

The reason is, the corruption of our nature; for had we, in paradise, preserved the innocence, and persevered in the grace which God gave us with our being, we should have had no opposition in virtue, nor no disorderly affections in our nature, but all our inclinations would have tended to good, and rested in God, his good will and pleasure would have been our only aim. But by sin, losing this grace, we lost this beautiful order, the subordination of our passions to reason, and of our reason to God; so vice stepped in and became a second nature, and, regardless of reason and of God's commandments, draws all to itself.

This we call self-love, and as opposite to the love of God, as white is to black, day to night, and good to evil. The love of God comes from the Holy Ghost: "The charity of God," says the apostle, "is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us;" (Rom. v. 3.) but the love of ourselves comes from the devil. "You are of your father the devil," says Christ to the perverse Jews, "and the desires of your father you will do." (John viii. 44.) Now, nothing corrects this vicious

nature but the grace of our Redeemer, whereby we are enabled to love God more than ourselves, and to prefer his will before our own.

Those who truly love God, refer all the goods they possess, whether of grace, nature, or fortune, to him; what they say, what they do, and what they think, is to promote his honor, advance his interest, and to do his will. And as to sufferings, they accept of all that befalls them, from what hand soever it comes, with a contented mind, and a resigned will; because they are God's appointment. This is contrary to the corruption of our nature; but it is according to reason, the perfection of our nature. For on the one side, it is reasonable to refer all to him, from whence all comes, and to employ all in his only service, who gave all to us. And on the other, when he is pleased to disappoint us of what we hope to have, or take from us what we have, it is fit we should submit to his appointments, and allow him, without murmuring, to dispose of his own as he judges best.

Thus the rich, who truly fear God, refer the use of all they possess to him; and thus the poor and pious laborer offers his toil and pains to him who chiefly employs him; and though he heartily desires the success of his endeavors, yet if it happen contrary, he is resigned, because he knows God's will is fulfilled in his disappointments; and this pious disposition carries him through all the various circumstances of his life.

Those who love themselves, have no farther aim in what they say, do, or think, than their own praise, their own interest, or their own pleasure; when they gain this end, they are content; but when disappointed, they fret, are uneasy, and much troubled, because it was not for God, but themselves, they labored; and this great uneasiness is a clear proof of it.

Thus it is for himself the covetous man heaps up riches; it is for himself the lascivious person seeks his pleasure; it is for himself the ambitious man endeavors to grow great; and it is for himself the worldling sweats and toils, and not for God. From

hence proceeds an insatiable avarice; from hence a boundless ambition; from hence a libertine's life; from hence the ungoverned desires of rule and dominion; from hence innumerable injustices and cruelties; from hence treachery, perjury, and villanies; from hence jealousy and impiety, treason and sacrilege, with many other crimes, St. Paul reckons up in his second epistle to Timothy.

But self-love does not only reign amongst great ones, for it is universally entertained, and even by those of the lowest rank; it lives in cottages as well as courts, and is followed by those of the meanest, as well as of the highest quality. From whence comes all our uneasiness and trouble; is it not from self-love? We are not content with the will of God. All our repining thoughts at other's advantages, is it not from the same cankered root? We are not content with our lot, we are not content God should dispose of his own blessings as he thinks fit. Examine your animosities, jealousies, contentions, quarrels, &c. and you will find self-love to be at the bottom, and the promoter of all. It is not God's will, nor his interest you seek with so much bitterness, but your own; it is not the love of him, but of yourself that sets you on. In fine, whence so much meddling with other folks' business, that concerns you not? Whence that itch of laying open their failings, ridiculing their doings, and diverting yourself at their expense? Is it not to gratify an inordinate passion of your own? In a word, make an observation of all your failings, and you will find self-love to lie at the bottom of all you observe, and more than you usually discern. Our Saviour then has reason to say to all: "If any one will come after me, let him take up his cross daily, and follow me."

A second reason that proves we are not to love ourselves is, because we are not made for ourselves, because our real happiness is not in ourselves, or rather because we cannot live of ourselves. Could we live of ourselves, without any superior as to being and preservation, had we no dependence on God, as to our lives and

fortunes, we might love and seek our happiness in ourselves; but since neither the being we have in the world, is of ourselves, nor the preserving of it from ourselves, but entirely depends on God as to both, he being our preserver, as well as our Creator; if then we ever be happy, he must be our happiness, and in him must be our last end. It is him then we must serve, whomever we serve; it is him we must seek in whatever we seek, and him we must love in whatever we love: it is to him then, to his honor and glory, we must direct the whole body of our thoughts and actions; and our only aim must be to please him. By consequence then, all other love opposite to this, must be evil; and all other love that is not in order to this, is no ways allowable. Self-love then, as neither having him for its end, and for its motive, must evidently be renounced.

And this is so true that our Saviour made it the great business of his life and actions, and the subject of his precepts and threats to beat down self-love, and root it out of our hearts; and this appears in the whole series of his life. When self-love begins to reign in our hearts, it makes us wish to be great and considerable in the world; and our Saviour, though God, and King of Heaven and Earth, took the form of a servant, humbled himself, and became a subject. Again, self-love makes us wish to be rich and want nothing; and Christ, rich as he was, led a poor and mean life in a workman's shop, and wanted all things. Self-love makes us think them happy, who make a figure in the world, and live in plenty at their ease and pleasure; Christ lived not so, nay, nor did he think so, for he delivered not *this* to us amongst his beatitudes; on the contrary he tells us (if we will hear him) that *they are happy that mourn*, and live in *sorrow*—they are happy that suffer afflictions and persecutions with patience; he tells us, happy are those that are meek and peaceable, humble and poor in spirit; that suffer the contradictions and evils of the world with sweetness and a Christian patience; and, therefore, whoever

will come after him, must renounce himself, and take up his cross daily and follow him. Thus you see your duty.

But the first means to help us to resist self-love that continually solicits us to seek ourselves in all we do, is to cast our eyes on Jesus Christ, who though he had all imaginable reason to love himself, yet sought not to please himself as the apostle assures us in the fifteenth chapter to the Romans: "Brethren, (says he, v. 3.) we must not please ourselves—for Christ did not please himself," but as it is written, (Psal. lxviii. 10.) "The reproach of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me." Now is it for Christ to deny himself, and we endeavor in all things to please ourselves? Is it for him, whose will was always strait and just, to put a restraint upon himself; and shall we, whose inclinations are naturally corrupt, and evil, seek ourselves? Is it for him, whose affections were always holy and divine, to refuse to indulge himself, and for us, whose minds are earthly and irregular in all things, to please ourselves?

If this divine person, who is our Redeemer and our God, sought not then to please himself, as it evidently appears; when for our salvation he chose to suffer what was contrary to his natural and human inclination, to fulfil the divine will that was common to him with his Father; is it just then, that a sinner, for whose good the Son of God refused to please himself, should seek himself in what he does? Shall God demean himself even to take the form of a servant, and like a slave subject himself to all manner of ignominy, sorrow, and contempt? And shall a slave unwillingly submit to contradictions, and affect the independence of a God? No, no, we must not please ourselves, for Christ did not please himself.

You would not suffer this, or that affront, self-love rises against it; you would not be subject to this persecution, that contradiction of life, this infirmity, or that opposition; you would meet with nothing disobliging. And why should I, you cry, when it is in my power to free myself? But have a care, dear Christians,

depose this unruly will. Christ wanted not power to free himself, but he would not, that he might fulfil the word of his Father He was infinitely rich, he needed not to have lived in poverty; he was infinitely glorious, he needed not to have submited to humiliations and contempt; he was infinitely powerful, he could have freed himself, and according to his human will he desired it. "Father, (says he,) if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me;" yet he concludes, "not my will, but thine be done."

What a powerful example to move us to renounce our own will, to do the will of God, to submit humbly to his orders, when and in what circumstances he thinks fit; and not frowardly to cast off, or too cautiously avoid the cross he sends, though it be in our power to do it! This is the first means, and certainly a very powerful one, to enable us to master self-love. Christ sought not to please himself, do not you; Christ submitted his human to the divine will, submit yours to the will of God. Christ behaved himself as if he did not act by himself, or for himself, although he had an absolute power over himself; so govern yourself as if you had no right over your mind and heart; you, who in reality cannot use them, but with an absolute dependence on God.

A second means to conquer self-love is, by degrees to deny yourself what you love, or are inclined to; I do not mean what is evil and forbid, but even what is permitted and lawful! This daily gaining some advantage over yourself, may at last make you absolute master over yourself.

Yet here I cannot but observe to you the subtle contrivances of self-love, it will deny itself sometimes what is agreeable and lawful, that it may take a greater liberty in what is more agreeable and unlawful. Our Saviour seems to take notice of it in the religious pharisees, who would strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel; step over a block, and stumble at a straw; not unlike unto those who are punctual in works of supererogation, and negligent in those of obligation: as if those could counterpoise these, and the piety of the one atone for the guilt of the other

Not to be deceived then in this, endeavor to correct that inclination to which you have the greatest bent, and in which the censorious world thinks you most blameable. For malicious censurers are often true observers, and we sooner hear a disagreeable truth from an enemy than a friend.

A third means is, never to be tired in the exercise of self-denial, nor ever to be discouraged in this war against self-love. For the conquest of yourself is not gained by one battle, much less by little skirmishes. Self-love may be kept under, but it never dies but with us; so it will continually furnish us with matter for trials and victory. It is like a living root that is continually putting out new shoots, or a spring that without intermission, sends up fresh water; so that we must be always pruning it, and daily laboring to turn the stream of our affections: for it being the business of our life, we must not expect to finish it but with our life.

You see, dear Christians, from what root all our desires grow, and from whence proceeds the breach of all God's commandments, viz., self-love, which Christ commands all to renounce, if we will follow him; and not to follow him, is never to come to him. He has given us the command, and shewn us the example; let us submit to the one, and imitate the other, that by following him here, we may hope to come to him hereafter; for to share in his sufferings is the surest means to share in his glory.

END OF DISCOURSES ON THE COMMANDMENTS

DISCOURSES

ON

SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly *places*, in Christ.—Ephes. i. 3.

Of all the blessings bestowed by Christ on his sacred spouse the church, the most excellent and sublime are the holy sacraments: which, as St. Ambrose says, "Are most wholesome medicines, instituted by Christ, either to recover or preserve the health of the soul." (L. 5. de Sacra. c. 4.) Wherefore amongst all the points of the Christian doctrine, there are none more necessary to be well known, than those which regard the sacraments. Other mysteries of faith we are only bound to know in speculation, so as to believe them; but of the sacraments, we are bound to have a practical knowledge, in order to receive them worthily; that is, with benefit to our souls. For as they are the means by which we are enabled to perform all Christian duties, and likewise the precious means by which the merits of Christ's passion are applied to the sanctification of our souls; so it is absolutely necessary for all persons to be well instructed in them, that those holy mysteries, being received with reverence, may heal, and effectually sanctify those who partake of them.

Before I speak of each sacrament in particular, it will be necessary to say something of them in general. I shall therefore

in this discourse lay before you the nature, necessity, dignity, and efficacy of the sacraments, as likewise the institution and number of them.

A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof: but more commonly it is defined, "a visible sign of invisible graces, instituted by Christ for the sanctification of our souls." In fine, it is agreed on by all, that a sacrament is a sign of a sacred thing. "We call it a sign," says St. Augustin, "because besides the thing which it lays open to the senses, it causeth also of itself, that we come to the knowledge of some other thing." (In John, tract 80.) For example, by the footsteps which we see imprinted on the earth, we gather that a man hath passed that way. So a sacrament is a visible sign, which declares unto us that which God worketh by its virtue in our souls, which cannot be perceived by our senses. Thus, when in the sacrament of baptism we are washed outwardly with water, certain words being used, by this outward washing is signified, that by the virtue of the Holy Ghost, all the spots, and filth of sin, are inwardly washed and blotted out, and that the soul is adorned with the noble gift of justification. But some one perhaps will ask, are not images and crosses signs of sacred things? I answer they are, but they are not therefore sacraments; because it is the nature of a sacrament not only to signify some sacred thing, but also to cause holiness, or grace in the soul. Crosses or images indeed signify some holy thing, but they do not contain, or give grace; but the sacraments of the new law do contain in themselves, and give a sacred thing, viz., the divine grace. Wherefore, St. Paul says, "He saved us by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost." (Tit. iii. 5.) And St. Augustin thus writeth: "The sacraments of the old law," says he, "promised the Saviour; the sacraments of the new law giveth health and life; for those did only signify, but these also effect what they signify." (Psalm lxxiii.) As the

seal of a king doth not only represent, and shew the image of the king, but also makes and imprints it in the wax: in like manner the sacraments in the New Testament not only signify grace, but also imprint and work grace in the soul of man.

The sacraments then are signs of a sacred thing, viz. of invisible grace, which is given in a visible element. Now, the word grace in the scriptures, and in the language of the faithful, is taken in divers senses. First, it is taken for all favors that God does us; other times for free gifts of God, termed graces, *gratis given;* because they are not given, for the deserts, nor always for the benefit of the receiver, but for the good of the church, as the gifts of the prophecy, preaching, and working miracles, &c.

Grace is not taken in any of these senses, when we speak of the sacraments; but it is taken for habitual and sanctifying grace, which is a most excellent quality, which sanctifies and renders us holy, and just in the sight of God; which makes us children of the eternal Father, brothers and co-heirs with Jesus Christ, living temples of the Holy Ghost, and "partakers of the divine nature," says St. Peter. (Epist. i. 4) We ought, therefore, to have the sacraments in the highest veneration, since we certainly know that by them we have a right to the kingdom of heaven.

If, then, we are obliged to have a reverence and esteem for the sacraments, what can we say or think of such impious wretches, who deride and contemn them, and this, because they seem to be abject and mean things? Our souls, cry they, have a loathing of sacraments so vile and mean: what force, say they, have water, bread, oil, and other sacramentals? Luther openly taught, that the sacraments were nothing but divine testimonies, to stir up and nourish faith: and that they were only to close up, as with a seal, the promises of God. The same doctrine Calvin cried up, saying, "The sacraments were nothing else but seals or testimonies, to sustain and bear up the weakness of our faith, and that by them we testify our devotion towards God." But what

strange doctrine is this? For if they be only seals, or testimonies, to sustain and bear up the imbecility of faith, why did Ananias say to St. Paul, "Be baptised, and wash away thy sins?" (Acts xxii. 16.) Again, why did St. Luke write, "Do penance, and in the name of Jesus Christ be baptised every one of you, for the remission of your sins?" (Acts ii. 38.) Again, why did St. Paul write to Titus, "He saved us by the laver of regeneration?" (ch. iii. 5) And what doth he mean, when he says in another place, "Cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life," (Ephes. v. 26.) but that the sacraments, through the merits of Christ's passion, have force and power to cleanse a soul, and to infuse virtue into it? Moreover, if they only seal up the promise of God, why do the holy Fathers unanimously affirm, that they give grace and infuse virtues? Hear what Tertullian says of the sacrament of baptism: "The flesh," says he, "is washed, that the soul may be cleansed." (L. de Baptis.) Behold how he affirms, that baptism was not instituted to stir up faith, but to purify the soul, and to infuse virtues. Again, speaking of the sacrament of confirmation, he says, "The flesh is anointed, that the soul may be sanctified; the flesh is signed, that the soul may be strengthened." And he affirms the same of orders: "The flesh," says he, "is covered, or shaded with the impression of hands, that the soul may be illuminated by the spirit." By which words he plainly shews, that the sacrament of orders is not a naked sign and testimony, ordained to stir up faith, but that by the imposition of hands, the soul is illuminated with the spirit of God. Tertullian also affirms the same of the sacrament of the holy eucharist, in these words, "The flesh is clothed with the body and blood of Christ, that the soul may be filled with God." What can be spoken more plainly? And in the same place he proves that our bodies shall rise again, because the sacraments are applied to the bodies, that their effects might pass to the soul. Moreover, if the sacraments of the new law are only mere signs of God's promise, why did St. Augustin thus write? "The sacra

ments of the new law," says he, "give health and salvation; the sacraments of the old law promised the Saviour." (Psalm lxxiii.) The sacraments are now changed, they are made more easy, are fewer in number, and more wholesome. This, dear Christians, is the doctrine of the holy Fathers, of the efficacy of the sacraments; who all of them affirm, that the sacraments were not instituted only to stir up faith, but that they are lively instruments, which give grace to the soul of man.

But perhaps some will say, or think with themselves, if the sacraments have so great force as to blot out sins, and infuse grace, why do such numbers in the church lie maimed with so many wounds of sin? To which I answer, what will medicines, though never so efficacious, avail the sick or wounded, if they will not make use of them? For if any one desires to be cured, he must go to the physician, ask his advice, and follow it by taking the medicines which he prescribes. In like manner, if we desire to be cured, as to our souls, we must have recourse to the heavenly physician, and frequent the sacraments, which he has instituted for the cure of our souls; for by this means we may receive the cure of our wounds, the pardon of our sins, and the grace of the Holy Ghost.

But some one, perhaps, will say, the passion of Christ was sufficient to blot out, or cancel the sins of the whole world; what need is there then of the sacraments, for it seems thereby, that an injury is done to Christ, as if his passion and merits were not sufficient for the redemption of the world.

To this I answer, that the passion of Christ was abounding, and sufficient to blot out all the sins of the world; but Christ's passion ought to be applied to us by the sacraments, to which God has so annexed justifying grace, that ordinarily he hath not decreed to give, and confer it on us, but by the use of them Now, for example, if there were in a city a great well, whose waters were most wholesome for the health of bodies, and were sufficient to quench the thirst of all the citizens, what would that

well and waters profit, if no man would draw the water out of the well? In like manner, the merits of Christ profit not if they be not applied. You see, therefore, it is most necessary to make use of the sacraments, by which God applies to us his merits, and by which, as instruments, he confers his grace upon us. And although St. Paul says, "The just man liveth by faith;" (Rom. i. 17.) yet he does not say, the just man lives by faith alone. Therefore to the sacraments is likewise left their force and virtue; for otherwise the merits of Christ would be excluded. We confess, that faith is much commended in the scripture, but it does not follow from thence, that faith alone worketh salvation, and not the sacraments; because, as a physician liveth by the knowledge of medicines, it followeth not, therefore, that knowledge alone is sufficient to cure the sick; for, besides the knowledge of medicines, the medicines themselves are necessary to drive away the disease. So the just man liveth by faith, but not by faith alone; because he ought also to make use of the sacraments, which are able to cure him of the disease of sin.

The sacraments, as I said before, were instituted by Christ our Lord, for the sanctification of our souls; yet none of them can be validly given, unless the same matter and form, which Christ appointed, be applied, and with the intention, and by the ministry of such, as Christ has ordained to administer them; because none but God is able to give power to any corporal thing to confer grace. "All the sacraments," says the council of Florence, (In dec. Fid.) "are perfected by three things, viz., by things as the matter, by words as the form, and by the person administering the sacraments, with intention of doing what the church does: whereof if any one be wanting, the sacrament is null, and of no effect."

Again, our Saviour Christ instituted the sacraments for divers causes, whereof the first is, that so he might accommodate himself to our imbecility and weakness; for so it is provided by nature, that those things which we cannot comprehend in mind

and understanding, we come to the knowledge of them by such things as are perceived by sense; which St. Paul, full of heavenly wisdom, teacheth us, saying, "The invisible things of God from the creation of the world, are clearly seen by the things that are made." (Rom. i. 20.) Wherefore, Christ did most wisely, in shewing, (through his goodness and mercy to us,) the hidden virtues of the sacraments, by sensible signs; for this was agreeable to human nature, which is composed of a body and soul. For, as St. Chrysostom excellently says, "If thou wert incorporated, that is, without a body, God would have given to thee naked and incorporeal gifts; but because thou hast a spirit added to thy body, spiritual gifts are delivered to thee in corporeal things." Hom. 83. in Matt.

A second cause is, that it might more easily appear, that the grace which is conferred by the sacraments, is from God alone; for if it were given by any spiritual thing, men might have expected, that they were to be sanctified by the proper virtue of that thing: but now, since that so excellent a gift is conferred upon us by abject and mean things, no place is left for such suspicion: wherefore, Christ gave light to the blind man with spittle and dirt, and not with some precious ointment, lest the virtue should be attributed to the ointment.

A third cause, why this institution of the sacraments was most necessary, is, says St. Ambrose, "That they might be as remedies for the soul's health, and ready at hand, either to recover or preserve it." (L. 5. de Sacr. C. 4.) For that virtue, which flows from the passion of Christ, that is to say, the grace which he merited for us on the altar of the cross, must come to us by the sacraments, as a conduit.

A fourth cause is, that they might be marks and signs, by which the faithful might be known, or distinguished from infidels; for as captains, in time of war, give to their soldiers a private sign or token, that they may the more easily know one another, so the sacraments distinguish the faithful from infidels.

The last reason is, that by them Christians might be exercised in humility; for it was just, that he who was created by God to rule over all things, being now fallen from his dignity, should be compelled to humble himself, for the recovery of the grace of God, and to seek his salvation from him, by creatures far inferior to himself.

But now, as to the minister of the sacraments: it is not an angel, or any of the people, but only those who are ordained to this purpose, as are bishops and priests "Neither," says St. Paul, "doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was." (Epist. ad Heb. v. 4.) But it is to be observed, that the sacraments do not depend on the dignity and merit of the ministers of them, but on the excellency and merits of Christ; for the ministers are only ambassadors, or deputies of Christ; for whatever they act, they do in the name of Christ. Wherefore, as St. Augustin says, (Centra Donot. L. 1. c. 4.) "They are not more true, and more holy sacraments, because they are administered by one that is better, but they of themselves are true and holy; for as (says he,) it makes no matter, as to the efficacy of the seed and plantation, whether or no that be done with clean or foul hands, so that the seed be good, and the earth fruitful." In like manner it matters not whether the sacraments be administered by a wicked and vile minister, or by one who is pious and good, provided that he faithfully perform his office. St. Gregory Nazianzen has this excellent saying, (In Orat. in S. Bap.) "An iron seal (says he) doth as well express the image of the king, as a silver or gold one; so the grace of God is as well imprinted by the sacraments in the soul of man, by an iron minister, as by a gold one;" wherefore St. Chrysostom justly observes, (Hom. 8.) "That the grace of a sacrament is not hurt by the wickedness of the priest."

Now, dear Christians, as to the number of the sacraments; if you attend to what the scripture asserts, you will find that there are seven sacraments.

First. We read in St. Mark of the sacrament of baptism, where he says, (c. xvi. 16.) "he that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved."

Secondly. Of confirmation, in the acts of the apostles, where St. Luke says, "That by the imposition of hands, by the apostles, was given the Holy Ghost."

Thirdly. Of the sacrament of penance, St. John makes mention, (c. xx. 23.) saying, "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them."

Fourthly. That the eucharist is a sacrament, the same evangelist witnesseth, (c. vi. 54, 55.) saying, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you: he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day."

Fifthly. Of extreme unction St. James teacheth, (c. v. 14, 15.) saying, "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him."

Sixthly. Of the sacrament of orders, St. Paul speaks, (2 Tim i. 6.) "I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee by the imposition of my hands."

Seventhly. Of the sacrament of matrimony, the same saint makes mention, in his epistle to the Ephesians, (c. v. 32.) "This is a great sacrament, but I speak in Christ, and in the church."

And St. Thomas proves this number of seven sacraments, by divers congruities. (3 Part. Q. 63. Art. 1.) For as there are many diseases and defects in the soul, so of necessity there must be several sacraments, which may bring remedies to it. For as a human body first is born, then it increaseth and is nourished, and often falls into a disease; so in the soul, changes of this sort are made. First, men are born to a new life; for this the sacrament of baptism availeth, whereby we are born again to Christ:

afterwards confirmation is added; by whose virtue it comes to pass that we are increased, and strengthened in divine grace. In the eucharist our souls are nourished with heavenly food; for of it our Saviour says, (John vi. 56.) "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." Penance followeth, by whose virtue lost health is restored, after we have received the wounds of sin. After this extreme unction, whereby the relics of sin are taken away, and the virtues of the mind are refreshed; wherefore St. James says, (c. v. 15.) "If he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." Holy order follows, whereby power is given to exercise in the church the public ministering of the sacraments, and to perform all sacred functions. Lastly, matrimony is added, that by a lawful and holy conjunction of male and female, children may be brought forth, and religiously bred up to the worship of God.

Having thus laid before you the nature, necessity, excellency, and effects of the sacraments in general, as also by whom they were instituted, and the number of them, it therefore only remains that I exhort you with St. Paul, (2 Cor. vi. 1.) that you receive not the grace of God in vain.

Consider what an injury and affront you offer to God, when you receive the sacraments unworthily; there is no irreverence in the world so great, as is the unworthy receiving of any sacrament. Christ standeth with the chalice of his passion, ready to pour it on your souls, to wash away your sins; and you profane that chalice, when you profane any sacrament, by receiving it unworthily: you then wilfully tread under foot the precious blood of Christ. The Son of God has provided, in the sacraments, a remedy for your weak and dying souls, and instead of applying it you abuse it. This, dear Christians, is a sin which hardens the heart against God; and for those who are guilty of this sin, if they continue any time in it, it is with great difficulty, and must be by a special grace of God, if ever they come to true repentance. I shall speak more of this in the sacraments of the

holy eucharist and penance, which wicked Christians sometimes abuse to their own damnation.

Again, consider what a prejudice you do to yourselves, when you neglect to make use of the sacraments; for by that means you deprive yourselves of innumerable graces, which God would oblige himself to give you in the rest of your life; this will render you extremely culpable in the sight of God, and you will die with great regret, seeing you had such sovereign remedies and helps offered you, and that you neglected to make use of them. Know and remember, dear Christians, that the sacraments are talents of inestimable value, given us, with an obligation to profit by them. We read in St. Matthew, (c. xxiv.) of a lord who was going into a foreign country, gave such and such talents to his servants, in order to improve them, and at his return called them to an account; but finding that he who had received but one talent, had not gained by it, "The unprofitable servant cast ye into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Now, if the unprofitable servant was so severely punished for not improving his talent, what think you would the lord have done to him if he had lost his talent? And what will Jesus say to us at the great accounting day? What will he do to us, if we shall have abused, or not used, and profited in virtue by the sacraments, which are so many talents bestowed upon us? What weeping, what regret, what gnashing of teeth, and what rage against ourselves, for having lost so valuable, such easy, and so frequent opportunities of securing our salvation, of advancing in virtue and enriching ourselves for eternity? But, on the contrary, the good and virtuous Christians, who have made a proper use of the sacraments, will then rejoice; they will admire their own happiness, and will acknowledge their wisdom in receiving them often; because they will then see that the sacraments were most rich talents, and infallible promises of the inestimable and infinite glory which they shall possess for ever.

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Going, therefore, teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Matt. xxviii. 19.

In the foregoing discourse I laid before you the nature, necessity, and efficacy of the sacraments in general. It is, therefore, necessary I should say something of each of them in particular; and first of the sacrament of baptism, as being called the door or gate of all the other sacraments; because it is the entrance to them; for until we are baptised, we are not Christians, and without baptism we cannot receive any of the other sacraments. The subject then of this discourse shall be on the necessity and efficacy of baptism.

If we look over the holy scripture, we shall find that none can come to the kingdom of heaven without baptism; which our blessed Saviour, by the words, above-mentioned out of St. Matthew, declares to be true, and by which words he commanded his apostles to teach and baptise all men. Go, says he, throughout the whole world, and purge it from all idolatry, and sow good seed in the field of the world; go wherever you can, that you may spread my gospel; teach all nations, says he, not what Aristotle or Plato taught, for their knowledge is only folly before my Father; but teach you the cross and my death, my miracles, and set forth my life, to be imitated by all; preach to the world how I descended from heaven, and put on human nature, what I suffered therein, how I was put to death, and redeemed the world with my blood, how I rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and how I am at last to come to judge the living and the dead; "baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." As if he would say, O my apostles it is not sufficient only to preach my death, it is not suffi-

cient only to believe in me, but you must, besides, baptise all men who will be saved: "For all are by nature the children of wrath," (says St. Paul, Ephes. ii. 3.) for the sin of Adam cleaves fast to human nature, for which all men have deserved eternal damnation, and from which they cannot be freed unless they are born again by baptism. Wherefore, St. John says, (c. iii. 5.) "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Whence you may see, that no man without baptism can be saved: for as heretofore the brazen serpent was the only remedy against the bite of the fiery serpents, so the only remedy against the wound of original sin, is baptism.

But lest any one should think that this law only belongs to those who are already grown up, and not to infants, since Christ said to his apostles, *Going, therefore, teach, &c.* therefore, in another place he says, in express words, that no person whosoever is excepted from the law of baptism: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:" as if he would say, O Nicodemus! thou tellest me, that it is impossible for a man to be born again, saying, how can an old man, such as I am, be born again, must he go into his mother's womb again to be re-born? Christ, therefore, thus answers him: I speak not, O Nicodemus! of a corporeal nativity, whereby a man must come again from his mother's womb, for this cannot be done; I speak then of a spiritual nativity, whereby a man is born again of water in baptism and the Holy Ghost; unless then a man be re-born by this nativity, which is made by water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of the Messias, which is the church, nor obtain eternal life: for this is that regeneration of which St. John says, (c. i. 13.) "who are not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This regeneration is in some sort like unto the regeneration of the natural Son of God, in the womb of his mother; for as in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, Christ

was conceived by the Holy Ghost, so we are conceived as it were in the font, and are re-born of the same spirit. But some perhaps will say, if baptism be so necessary, that no man without it can enter the kingdom of heaven, shall a man then, who is grown up to full age, and cannot have baptism, though he desires it, and is sorrowful for his sins, be excluded from the kingdom of heaven? to which I answer, that if with *contrition*, that is with a true and sincere sorrow for his sins, he hath not actually received baptism, and yet really desires it, then he may be saved; for so the words of Christ ought to be understood, where he says, "Unless a man be born again of water and the holy Ghost:" in like manner he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, who for Christ's sake suffers death, although he be not baptised; because martyrdom has the force of baptism; for our Saviour assures us, (Matt. x. 32.) that "every one, therefore, that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father, who is in heaven."

Now, dear Christians, since no one can enter into the kingdom of heaven, without actual baptism, or having it in desire, or being baptised in his own blood by martyrdom, you cannot, therefore, but see, how necessary it is for all persons, especially married women, to learn and know well all that is necessary and essential to the validity of this sacrament: they ought likewise to take great care that their children and servants know well how to baptise a child, in case of necessity, in order that the infant may not be lost for want of baptism.

Observe now what you must do in order to baptise a child, or any person: you must take water, not rose-water, or any other made by art, but natural water, that is to say, water of the fountain, well, river, pit, pond, sea, or rain; you must wet, or wash the body of the infant with it, by pouring it upon the head, if you possibly can; and if you cannot wash the head, you must put water upon the breast, arm, foot, or upon some other naked part· and it is to be observed, that the same person who pours

the water, must, whilst he is pouring it on the child, say distinctly (having an intention at the same time to do what the church does) these words: "I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Because, as St. Thomas says, (3 part. Q. 66. art. 7.) "Baptism which is given upon any other part is not certain." And when you are not certain that the child is dead, you ought to baptise it under condition, saying, "If thou art living, I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." For it is better to put yourself in danger of baptising a dead child, than not to baptise one living; and because the life of these little creatures is sometimes so feeble and imperceptible, that we think them wholly dead, when some time after they will give signs of life, it is therefore necessary that all persons, and especially women, should know all this: for sometimes it happens, that a woman falls into labor suddenly, and unexpectedly, and that the infant cannot be bronght into the world alive; or if it be, it is so weak, that in all appearance it will die before an ordinary minister of this sacrament can be had; and if those about her know not how to baptise, the infant, for want of this, may be deprived of salvation; and so important is the salvation of a soul, that every one should learn with great care how to administer this sacrament.

In fine, the applying of this sacrament is of so great importance, that it is the duty of every one to know well the *matter* and *form* of this sacrament. The *matter*, as I said before, is true and natural water. "The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the wise," (says St. Paul, 1 Cor. i. 27.) so God has chosen an inferior, or weak element, viz., water, to confound the strongest sin. For as water washeth bodies, so baptism washeth souls; again, as water washeth away filth, so baptism washeth away the blemishes of sin.

The form is this: "I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." There are divers reasons why Christ would have the three Divine Persons of the

Blessed Trinity named in the form of baptism: but the chief are, in order to declare whence baptism has its virtue or force, viz., from the Father, who sent his Son, that he might die for men; and from the Son, who instituted baptism, and by his blood gave it force and virtue to blot out sins; and from the Holy Ghost, who should inwardly purge and sanctify souls: and again, because the blessed Trinity is the principal object of our faith; wherefore man doth make his first profession in this sacrament, to be thereby received into the body of the church. So that to baptise a person in the name of God, in the name of Christ, or in the name of the Trinity only, is not valid; because it does not express the mystery, or three Divine Persons of the blessed Trinity. Every one ought, therefore, to take great care that they do not violate the form of baptism in the administration thereof.

As to the effect of this sacrament, there have been divers errors concerning it. Formerly the Origenists held, that sins were not taken away by baptism, but only covered: the same doctrine the Lutherans teach now in our age, who affirm, that sins are not truly taken away by baptism. But this doctrine is evidently false; for if sins are not truly taken away by baptism, how can that of the prophet Ezechiel, (c. xxxvi. 25.) be true, saying, "I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness," or filth of sin? And why does St. Paul say to Titus, (c. iii. 5.) "He saved us by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost?" Therefore, the proper and particular effect of baptism is, to make him who receives it a member of the body of Christ, as being admitted into his church by it, and to dispose and prepare him for the rest of the sacraments; for no other sacrament can be received, till we have first been baptised. The general effect of baptism, which it hath in common with all the sacraments, is to give grace for the sanctification of souls; and this it doth after so full and plentiful a manner, that it remitteth all sin whatsoever, original and actual, great and little, and forgiveth all punishment due to it in the

next world. "We are buried, (says St. Paul, Rom. vi. 4.) together with Christ by baptism into death." That is, to the death and destruction of sin, and of all punishment after it. We have, dear Christians, a figure of this in Namaan, the leprous prince of Syria, who, washing himself in the waters of Jordan, as the prophet had prescribed him to do, he came forth so clean and perfectly cured, that the scripture says, (2 Reg. v. 14.) "His flesh was restored as the flesh of a little child"

The apostles have declared the effect of baptism, by divers types or figures of the Old Testament. St. Peter (1 Ep. iii. 21.) applies the miraculous salvation of mankind by water, in the days of Noah, as a figure of our salvation by the water of baptism. St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 2.) delivers the passage of the Israelites through the sea to the land of promise, as a figure of our passing the waters of baptism to our desired rest in glory. Thus would God honor baptism with these great figures, and inspire the apostles to take notice of them.

The holy Fathers, from time to time, have spoken wonderful things of the efficacy of this sacrament; for they teach, that various and manifold graces are conferred on us by it. Wherefore, St. Paul says to Titus, "He saved us by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost." We were born the slaves of sin, we are re-born children of justice; we were born sons of the devil, and children of hell; we are re-born sons of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. The truth of this all the holy Fathers witness; "The flesh, (says Tertullian, De Bap. xvi.) is washed, that the soul may be spotless." St. Ambrose says much the same, (in C. 1 ad Rom.) And St. Cyprian says, (Ep. lxiv. ad Fidum.) "That infants are to be baptised, that they may receive remission of sin." The like doth St. Hierom teach in his epistle to Oceanus, saying, (Ep. lxxxv. ante medium.) "All sins are remitted to us in baptism." Whence he calls baptism a deluge, or flood, saying, "Wonderful heretofore was the deluge of waters designed for the punishment, or revenge of sin; but

another more wonderful deluge of the divine mercy was sent on earth when baptism was given to men, wherein all sins, and punishments due to them, were blotted out." Let us give ear to what St. Augustin says upon the same subject. "How comes, (says he, L. vi. cont. Julian.) so great virtue to be in water, as to touch the body, and to cleanse the soul?" By which words he plainly shews, that baptism does not only cover, or hide sins, but truly cleanseth the soul from sins. But he speaks still more plain, in his book which he wrote of the baptism of infants.

Those who want faith, as Heathens, Turks, &c., ask, what force or virtue the water of baptism hath? I answer with all the holy fathers, the doctors of the church, it cleanseth the soul: but not by its own natural force and efficacy, but by the divine power. For as the water which was in the pond called Probatica, did not cure of itself, but only when it was stirred or moved by an angel; so likewise in us, the water of itself does not work or operate, but when it receives the grace or virtue of the spirit.

The first favor, or benefit conferred on us by baptism is, the blotting out of all sins, and a spiritual regeneration, whereby being made just, we become heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

The second favor, or benefit given us by baptism is, that it makes a soul beautiful, and beloved of God; wherefore St. Cyril says, (Cyril Hieros. Catech. 2 & 3 c.) "Being dead in thy sins, thou descendest, and ascendest again, being raised to life in justice by baptism.

The third favor, or benefit which is conferred by baptism is, that it opens to us the kingdom of heaven.

Since then so great are the benefits we receive by baptism, all men ought to be watchful, that they lose not again by sin, the grace they have received in baptism, lest worse things befall them; for to all re-born or baptised is said, that which Christ said to the man sick of the palsy, at the probatical pond, where having cured him, he said, (John v. 14.) "Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee:" Thou

art washed clean, defile thyself no more with filth, thou hast escaped the slavery of thy enemies, submit thyself no more to their heavy yoke: thou hast driven the devil out of thy soul, being expelled, call him not back again. The baptised promiseth to renounce the devil: now he who renounceth satan, renounceth also his works. What the baptised ought to do, Christ himself declares, when he said to his disciples, (Matt. xxviii. 20.) "Baptise all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Therefore, baptism alone is not sufficient, for the observation of God's commands is likewise necessary; according to that of St. Augustin, "the life of a Christian must be agreeable to baptism." The husbandman watereth his trees, to the end they may bear fruit, but the barren trees he casts into the fire; in like manner God watereth man with the saving waters of baptism, to the end that he produce the fruit of good works: but if he will not produce them, he delivers him up, being void of fruit, to the flames of hell. "Trees, (says St. Chrysostom, Hom. xxi.) that are well planted, if they make no return of fruit for the labor spent about them, they are delivered up to the fire; the same in some sort, (says he) may be said of those who are baptised, if they bring forth no fruit."

You are, dear Christians, dead to sin in baptism; beware then that you never live to it again: you have put off the old man, never put it on again. Remember, that sins committed after baptism are far greater, more enormous, and unworthy of pardon, than the sins of infidels; for by baptism you have received the grace of God, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost; if then you sin, notwithstanding these favors, you have much less excuse than a Turk, Jew, or Pagan. If you have as yet preserved your baptismal robe of innocence, walk in it till death; for it is more honorable, more pleasant, more easy, and more secure to go by the way of innocence, than by the way of penance, to everlasting life in the kingdom of heaven.

DISCOURSE II.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

oing, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Matt. xxviii. 19.

THERE is nothing, dear Christians, can excite you to a more lively acknowledgment of Christ's favors to you, than to think seriously and frequently upon the graces he has conferred upon you, by making you children of God, and members of the church by baptism. In the last discourse I laid before you the necessity and efficacy of baptism: my design in this is to explain to you the ceremonies used therein, as also to shew you the excellency of this sacrament.

The ceremonies which are used in baptism, are as so many lessons, informing us of the effects of grace obtained by this sacrament; as also to shew us, what the obligations are, which we contract by the sacrament of baptism.

First, then, the water which is used in baptism, is solemnly consecrated twice in the year, viz. in the vigils of Easter and Pentecost, and that for this reason; that Christians might understand or know, that the virtue and effect of baptism proceeds from the death and passion of Christ; and that baptism cleanseth us from sins, and makes us favorites of heaven; but not by the natural virtue of water, but by the virtue of the merits of Christ; for to that end are directed the prayers of the church, which she uses in the consecration of water; where she beseeches God, that he would vouchsafe to sanctify this water, for Christ our Lord's sake, by the virtue of the Holy Ghost; and that all the children of Adam, who shall receive the sacred baptism of Christ, may be freed from their sins. Wherefore, St. Cyprian says, "That the water ought first to be consecrated, and sanctified by the priest." (Epist. lxx.) And St. Basil thus writeth, "We conse-

crate," says he, "the water of baptism, and the oil of unction." De Spirit. Sanct. c. xvii.

The font being consecrated, the child is brought to the church door, but must not enter; to signify to us, that we must first lay down our burden of sin, if we will enter into the house of our Lord. Then the minister of the church pronounces the exorcisms; he rebukes the wicked spirit, and commands him, by certain prayers, to depart, and give place to the coming of the Holy Ghost. St. Ambrose makes mention of this ceremony above 1300 years ago: "When a priest," says he, "goes to baptise a person, he first begins with exorcism." De iis qui initientur.

Afterwards he breathes on the child; by which is signified the breath of the good spirit, which men receive when the wicked spirit goes out. And this custom St. Cyril (Hierus. Catech. 8.) mentions upwards of thirteen hundred years ago. No one ought, therefore, to laugh at it, lest he be contemned and scorned by Christ, who used the like when he gave the holy spirit to his disciples; for St. John says, "He breathed on them, and he said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." C. xx. 22.

After the exorcism, the priest makes the sign of the cross upon the child; first on the forehead, which is the seat of bashfulness, to give you to understand, that you ought never to be ashamed of the cross of Christ; then on the breast, to teach you, that you ought always to have Christ crucified in your hearts. This ceremony St. Augustin makes mention of; for speaking to the catechumen, "You are," says he, "to be signed this day on your forehead with the sign of the cross, that hereafter the devil may be afraid to touch you, as being marked with this saving sign" The ceremonies being performed, salt is put into the mouth of the baptised; to signify to you, that God, by virtue of his holy spirit, would season and preserve your hearts and minds, so that you may be able hereafter to keep yourselves clean and pure from the stench and filth of sin, and that you may perceive the savor and taste of good works, and that you be not any more

corrupted with sin. By this taste then of salt, you are admonished, that all your works and words ought to be seasoned with Christian prudence and wisdom, of which salt is an emblem, in as much as it seasons and gives a relish to all things.

After this the priest conducts the baptised, into the church or chapel, and so to the font, saying, "Enter into the church of God, that thou mayest have part with Christ, unto life everlasting."

Then the priest toucheth the ears and nostrils of the infant with spittle. This ceremony some people laugh at; but St. Ambrose makes mention of it, saying, "Therefore, the priest toucheth thy ears, that they may be opened to hear the commands of God; and thy nostrils, that thou receivest the good odor of faith and devotion." (L. 1. de Sacram. et de iis qui Myst. init. C. 1.) The priest does this in imitation of Christ, who, by a like ceremony anointed the eyes of a blind man, as we read in the gospel; (John ix. 6.) and also put his finger into the ears of a deaf man, (St. Mark vii. 34.) and said, *Ephpheta*, that is to say, be thou opened.

When this is done, the priest asks him who is to be baptised, *Do you renounce the devil, and all his works and pomps?* To which the godfather and godmother answer, in the name of the infant, (to every question,) *I renounce them.* Of this renouncing Tertullian makes mention, (L. de Cornon. Mil. c. 13.) above thirteen hundred years ago; and also St. Cyprian; (Epist. 7. 54.) and St. Augustin, "You have professed," says he, "to renounce the devil, and that not only to men, but to God and his angels." Perhaps some one may say, infants have not the use of reason, therefore they cannot renounce the devil. To this I answer, that children perform this, and profess their faith by the words of their godfathers and godmothers, who answer for them. Hence, it is, godfathers and godmothers make themselves in some sort sureties for their godchildren; and, therefore, they are obliged to instruct them, or at least see that they are instructed in matters of faith, when they come to the use care that they

perfectly know the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Seven Sacraments, and those things which are the first rudiments of the Christian religion. Give ear to what St. Augustin says: "I admonish you, dear brethren," says he, "both men and women, who are godfathers and godmothers, that you are sureties before God, for the children you answer for at the sacred font." (Serm. 163 de Temp. & Serm. 165.) You ought therefore, to be solicitous for them in order to their salvation.

These things being performed, the priest anoints the infant, or baptised person, with holy oil, on the breast and shoulders; the anointing the breast is to signify to you, the necessity of fortifying the heart with heavenly courage to act manfully, and to do your duty in all things; and the anointing between the shoulders is to signify, the necessity of the like grace, to bear and support all the adversities and crosses of this mortal life.

The unction being made, the child is baptised with water, (as mentioned before,) and the priest signeth the child with the sign of the cross, with holy oil or chrism, on the top of the head, to signify that you are now become a member of Jesus Christ, and that he is now your head, and that you are consecrated to him in baptism; for it is the custom of the church to anoint all those things, which she solemnly consecrates to the service of God.

After this the priest puts over the baptised a white garment or covering, called the *chrisom*, to signify, says St. Ambrose, that you then put off the robe of sin, and put on the chaste veil of innocence.

Lastly, a burning or lighted candle is given to the baptised, to put you in mind to prepare yourselves worthily for the coming of the spouse, not with an extinguished lamp, like the foolish virgins, mentioned in the gospel, (Matt. xxv.) but with a burning lamp; that is, with faith not dead, but which is burning with charity. By this, dear Christians, you may plainly see that there is nothing superstitious or vain in the ceremonies of baptism. Besides, as St. Augustin says, "To question the ceremonies of

the universal church, or to dispute of them, as though they were not to be done, is most insolent madness." Epist. 118.

Now, to give you a clear idea of the excellency and virtue of this sacrament, you need only consider three things. First—What a miserable state you were in before you were baptised. Secondly—How by your baptism you were freed from this misery. And thirdly—What an honor you are raised to by receiving the grace of baptism.

You know that our first parents, by their disobedience to the law of God, made us all sinners and enemies to God; and so we were all condemned to eternal punishment for want of original justice, as being all born in sin: for, as St. Paul says, "We were by nature children of wrath." (Ephes. ii. 3.) Behold then the woful consequence of one single sin of disobedience! a misfortune much more to be lamented, as it is so universal, that even infants themselves must feel the heavy weight of it. But it is here as in other things, we are to admire the divine providence, whose judgments and ways are incomprehensible to men. Let an enemy of our faith attack us upon the mystery of the holy eucharist, or any other point of the Catholic doctrine, I will ask him what reason he can give why Adam's posterity should be punished for Adam's sin? Why children, who never committed any sin themselves, should be damned for the sin of their first parents? I will desire him to explain to me from reason alone, the sacred mystery of the blessed Trinity, viz. the unity and trinity of God; let him tell me if he can, according to our weak way of thinking, how one and the same divine nature, can be three distinct persons? And yet this is what all Christians believe, as well as Catholics. But here it is that faith must save us; whereas, if we follow our own imaginations, we shall be lost. Nor can it be said, that we who believe the doctrine of Christ, have no reason to give for the articles of our faith, since we have the strongest and best of reasons on our side, viz. the word of God, and the unerring authority of his church, which we are bound to hear

because she can teach nothing but truth; for Christ hath promised, that "he and his holy spirit will abide with her to the end of the world, and teach her all truth;" and that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against her." Upon these two motives we ground our faith and build our hopes; and as to what is above our weak understanding, we captivate reason to make it obedient to faith, and say with St. Paul, "O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are thy judgments, and unsearchable thy ways!" Who can pretend to know the will of God, or who dare to presume to counsel him?

Ah! dear Christians, what comfort for you to find so wholesome a remedy in the sacrament of baptism, against the misfortune you are all born to! Could you desire any more convincing proof than this, of the excellency of this sacrament? For what preserved you from the greatest of all miseries, viz. your being separated from God, but this sacrament? Do but think seriously on what you were before baptism; then you were not members of the church of Christ, out of which there is no salvation.

The first ceremony performed at your baptism, was to bring you into the church: "Enter (says the priest) into the temple of God, that you may have part with Christ." Now, as you belonged not to that chaste spouse of Jesus Christ, the church, before your baptism, to whom then do you think you belonged? I will tell you; you were then under the tyranny of the devil, and belonged to him; and it was for this reason the minister of Christ ordered him to quit your soul, saying, "Begone, Satan, from this child, who is the image of God, that the Holy Ghost the comforter, may take place in his soul." You see then, that before baptism, you were slaves to Satan; but the minister of God, acting in his name, and by his power, set you at liberty.

The miserable state you were in before baptism, is signified to you by the exorcisms, which are an ancient ceremony of the church. Give ear to what the priest says in this ceremony, "I exorcise thee, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, and of

the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and command thee to depart from this servant of God." Therefore, this malignant spirit had possession of your souls, and he could not be dispossessed but by invoking the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. O the infinite goodness of God, who gave to men, his ministers, so great a power and command over evil spirits! And from whom do the ministers of Christ receive this power, but from Jesus Christ himself?

Another thing which shows you the excellency of this sacrament, and which ought to make you ever thankful to God for having received it, is this: because you could do nothing yourselves which could deserve so great a blessing; for Almighty God, out of his pure mercy and goodness conferred it upon you, without the least merit or desert on your side. Let us then thank the divine goodness, who has chosen us, preferably to so many others, who never have had the happiness to receive this sacrament: Let us, I say, thank and praise Almighty God for so great a favor and add to our sentiments of adoration, a most lively acknowledgment; which ought to be so much the greater, as our baptism raises us to so sublime and elevated a condition.

The degree of honor you are raised to by baptism, is, that you are made Christians; and what can be greater or more noble? For to be a Christian is, to be a disciple of Jesus Christ; it is to have God for your Father, and to be heirs of the kingdom of heaven. The greatest titles in this world, honors, riches, and nobility, all are nothing, if compared to the honor of being a Christian. So whether you be poor, or rich, or whatever state or condition you be in, if you are true Christians, you are brethren of Jesus Christ, and heirs of his kingdom. Consider then frequently with yourselves, dear Christians, what you were before baptism: you were, says the apostle, in darkness; and what drew you from that miserable state of darkness, but your baptism?

O how happy are you then to be received into the Catholic church? How happy to have been made the adopted sons of the Almighty, heirs of the eternal kingdom of heaven, and joint heirs

with Christ! To have been, by the providence and mercy of God, drawn from the power of darkness, from the slavery of the prince of darkness! You, who were born objects of God's eternal hatred, liable to eternal misery, subject to the endless pains of hell: oh! how grateful ought you to be for this benefit, which God has bestowed upon you before so many, even much the greater part of the world, preferring you to so many, who perhaps would have made far better use of such a blessing. Why were not you born amongst infidels, Jews, or Turks? Why were you preferred before so many millions in the world, who are born and die in sin? You were born in sin, and as deserving of hell as they. For in Adam all have sinned, (says St. Paul, Rom. v. 12.) You were born sinners, as sure as you were the sons of Adam; you were excluded by his prevarication, from the kingdom of heaven for ever. Was there any reason then that Almighty God could have, to love you more than them? Could you deserve to be loved more than they? Not in the least; you were born his enemies as well as they; it was not any merit or desert on your side; but it was the pure goodness and mercy of God, who made you his adopted sons, by the baptism of Christ; whilst his justice left them the slaves of sin and the devil. It was his goodness which preferred Jacob, that chose you. It was his justice which left Esau an object of his hatred, that permitted them to remain in their darkness and misery, who were created of the same dust and clay: you vessels of honor, and left them vessels of disgrace. O let us, dear Christians, ever bless and praise the infinite goodness of God, who, by calling us to the grace of baptism, has put us in the way to life everlasting.

DISCOURSE III.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Matt. xxviii. 19.

We were all born in sin, but by the particular providence of God we have been washed from this original guilt, by the waters of baptism, and by the merits of our Saviour Christ. But what will it avail you to have been adopted among the children of Christ, and heirs of his kingdom if your lives have not been answerable to this character? You were then made Christians, you bear yet the name of Christians, but have you lived like Christians? Have you complied with the indispensable obligations incumbent upon you, by the engagement and promise you made to God at your baptism? This is what you ought often to set before your eyes. The obligations then which you contracted in your baptism, shall be the subject of this discourse.

When you received the sacrament of baptism, the priest, in quality of God's vicegerent, asked you, if you renounced Satan, who is God's great enemy. You made answer in the presence of heaven and earth, in the sight of God and his angels, by the mouth of your godfather and godmother, that you renounced him. The priest continued, and asked you, if you renounced all his pomps. You answered again by the same mouth, that you renounced them. He added farthermore, and all his works; and you protested that you renounced them. But oh! how little do people heed these promises! or supposing them to be mindful of them, their guilt is the greater for breaking them so audaciously Nevertheless, it will be upon account of these promises, that God will judge you so strictly at the last day; the sentence thereof will be pronounced according as you have kept or broken those promises and vows, which you made to God in your baptism

Consider, therefore, frequently with yourselves, what you then renounced.

First, you renounced the devil: but now you seem to make little or no account of that promise; though all the holy fathers have had the greatest regard and veneration for it, and never speak of it but in terms which shew plainly what they thought of it. St. Chrysostom says, (Hom. 25.) "that it is a bond, and a very great obligation, by which, we engage ourselves to God." St. Jerome in his epistle to Heliodorus, says, "That it is a solemn oath, which we make to God, to be always faithful to him, and never to adhere to the devil." "Be mindful, (says St. Ambrose, L. 1. de Sac. c. 2.) where and to whom you make this promise." You ought therefore to reflect frequently upon the engagements you made, when you renounced the devil in baptism; you then promised to give yourselves entirely to God; and he lays his claim and title to you, and has imprinted his arms in the indelible character given in baptism, (like a seal or stamp, which the greatest sins are not able to take away; the which notwithstanding, by sin, becomes an infamous mark of treachery and rebellion in him who carries it,) to be a continual proof that you belong to him. It is upon this principle that St. Paul says in so many places in his epistle, (1 Cor. vi. 19.) "That we are not now our own," but that we belong to God; that we are his temple, his place of abode, his sanctuary, which he has consecrated to himself.

You belong not to yourselves, you are not for yourselves, since you are consecrated to God by baptism. Your lives are not your own, they ought to be employed in the service of God, to whom you stand indebted for them. Your bodies are not yours, your eyes are not yours, God lent them to you, to make use of them in lawful things, but not to behold immodest objects; your tongues are not your own, so that you ought never to employ them in evil discourse, but to make use of them in blessing him, to whom they belong; your hearts are not yours, they are God's property

so that all the affections you set upon creatures, when not referred to God, are so many robberies. In fine, you have nothing which, properly speaking, belongs to yourselves.

But above all, it is chiefly your souls that appertain to God, upon which, in your baptism, he has imprinted his image; and in consideration thereof, you should often say to yourselves, O my soul, I belong to God, I am his by a multiplicity of titles, but particularly by my consecration in baptism, and the donation I then made of myself to God; must it not then be a grievous sacrilege in me, if, after consecrating myself to God, as I have done in baptism, I should profane myself by making a criminal use of my soul and body? What can I expect, or what punishment ought I not to fear, if I profane my soul with sin? Ah! why then should I not deliver myself up to God in perpetual servitude, to whom I entirely belong? Why should I not live in a voluntary subjection, and an agreeable dependence on his divine will and conduct? What! my soul, wilt thou never be subject to thy God; seeing that upon this doth depend both my perfection and salvation?

Let us then, dear Christians, give ourselves to God with all our hearts, since we have devoted ourselves to him of our own free choice, in baptism, by promising to be faithful to him. This was the first promise we made to God when we renounced the devil. Now let us see the second (which is only in consequence of the former,) whereby we renounced all his pomps and works.

There are but few Christians who are willing to have any open dealings with the devil; and there is scarce one who does not make profession, if not by his actions, at least by his words, to have no communication with that enemy of God, and consequently who does not willingly ratify the first promise he made in his baptism of renouncing Satan. But as to his pomps and works, it is far otherwise; for there are but very few persons who in reality renounce them as they ought, and who are even willing to say they renounce them; and consequently very few who are

faithful to this promise of their baptism, whereby they engage themselves to renounce all the pomps and works of the devil. It is no difficult matter, dear Christians, to conceive what these pomps are; the very word itself shows plainly that by it are meant, all the pomp and grandeur of this world, which exceeds the bounds of necessity, or at least, all that which reason and a becoming decency do not require.

Now, as to the works of Satan, in their general signification, and widest extent, are understood all sorts of thoughts, words, and actions, whereby we transgress the law of God; that is to say, all the sins that rob us of the grace of God, and kill the soul; and they are called the works of Satan, because he is the principal author of them. But if we take the word in a stricter signification, the works of Satan are the occasions of sin; that is to say, those places and assemblies where the devil reigns, by the wicked example of such as, in pursuing their own vicious inclinations, involve others in the same wicked practices, and the like occasions of sin; from which no one hardly ever escapes without having his soul defiled with sin. Or if you will have another explanation of it, the works of Satan are the rules and maxims of the wicked world, or rather the devil, who is the prince thereof. For instance, that we must receive no affront, but have satisfaction if we can; that we must extol ourselves above all others as much as in us lies; that we must enrich ourselves by any means whatsoever; and other like pernicious maxims. Behold now, dear Christians, the works of Satan, which you have solemnly renounced in baptism, and consequently you cannot practise them without perjuring yourselves in a most criminal manner.

By baptism you have engaged yourselves to renounce the world, to separate your affections, to die to sin and the world. "Are you ignorant, (says St. Paul, Rom. vi. 3.) that whosoever is baptised must die as our Saviour Christ died?" What a shame not to keep a promise made to God, when any man ought to be ashamed of breaking a promise made to another, especiallly to a

friend, or to his prince! If then you have made a solemn promise to God at your baptism, as certainly you have, be sure to keep it: but let me beg of you to examine yourselves well on this point, and cast an eye back upon your actions, and see whether you have renounced the devil, his pomps, and works, in thought, word, and deed: have you in the time of temptations stood faithful to your promise? Have you not taken delight in the works of the devil, which he proposed to you? Have you not in words renounced Almighty God, and joined with the devil? For how often do persons wish themselves and others to the devil, and if Almighty God should take them at their word, as the devil is very willing he should, where would they have been long before this? Now, can it be said that such persons renounce the devil, who have him so frequently in their mouths, who imitate him by their oaths, curses, and blasphemies, which the devil and damned souls in hell continually vomit forth against God? In fine, have you renounced the works and pomps of the devil? Have you never consented to the works of darkness, to sins of gluttony, drunkenness, impurity? To sins of detraction, anger, hatred, and revenge? To sins of disobedience, of frequent omissions of the precepts of God! Can your consciences say you have always been free, that you have always remained united to God? You are happy, dear Christians, and thrice happy too, provided you have preserved, and kept your promise to God; but if you have many times, and many ways fallen into sins and abominations against God; if your hearts, instead of renouncing the works of the devil, have been settled on them; if you have loved the pleasures, riches, and grandeur this world affords, what then must you expect? What plea can you make? Give ear to the terrible threats of St. Paul, (1 Cor. vi. 9.) "Know you not," says he, "that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of heaven? Be not deceived, for neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers, nor extortioners, shall possess the kingdom

of God." So that there is no heaven for those persons who follow their own passions, who yield to the works of the devil, which they solemnly promised to renounce.

But you have not only engaged yourselves by baptism, to renounce the devil, his works, and pomps, but also to follow and imitate Christ; you must remember what St. Paul says, (Gal. iii. 27.) that whosoever have been baptised in Christ, have put on Christ. Now, what is it to have put on Christ? It is to live so that Christ appear in all our actions. For as a garment covers a person all over, that nothing else appears, so to put on Christ, is to make all our actions conformable to Christ, so that all of them resemble the actions of Christ. And as the exterior habit does distinguish persons of honor from the common people, so must the habit of Christians, this robe of virtue, distinguish a true Christian from all others.

Again, a person who is baptised, makes profession of the faith of Christ, chooses it for his vocation; what a shame then not to endeavor to be perfect in it! Persons in the world, what pains do they not take to improve themselves? What anxieties do not merchants undergo for gaining the transitory riches of this world? What pains do scholars take to become learned? And strange, that a Christian should not endeavor to perfect himself in the vocation of Christ! that neither the love of Almighty God, nor the promises of eternal happiness, nor the fear of punishment, can prevail upon him to make him seriously apply himself, and study how to be a perfect Christian, as he is obliged to be.

Every one is obliged to perfection; not only priests and religious, but all who have put on Christ; it is what our Saviour Christ himself commands: "Be you perfect, (says he, Matt. v. 48.) as your heavenly Father is perfect." It is usual for children to take after their father, to imitate him, to love what he loves, and hate what he hates. Almighty God is your Father, you must therefore imitate him, and not degenerate; love virtue and hate sin.

In fine, at your baptism you were made Christians, and now

you profess to be so, and remain so; but give me leave to ask you, what it is to be a Christian? It is not only to believe, for as our Saviour says, (Matt. vii. 21.) "Not every one who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who doth the will of my Father, who is in heaven." So that the bare name of a Christian will signify nothing in order to salvation, unless you keep the commandments of God; and practise Christian perfections; for there is no following of Christ, without taking up his cross; without the exercise of mortification, humility, and poverty of spirit; without imitating the patience, the charity, and other virtues of our Saviour Christ.

Has your life hitherto, and your thoughts, words, and actions, been like unto this? Has your life been spent in the exercise of those virtues? Have you lived mortified, chaste, humble, obedient, patient, fervent in prayer, and the practice of good works? Has your exterior and interior been conformable to Christ, in thought, word, and deed? Have you sanctified your bodies as the temple of God? O happy souls, who comply with these obligations! What a comfort and joy will it be to them at the hour of death, to have kept their robes of innocence undefiled? But, alas! where shall we find this baptismal innocence in this unhappy age?

In fine, if it has been your misfortune to defile your baptismal innocence by mortal sin, let me exhort you to make haste to wash away with penitential tears those dreadful stains of sin, which otherwise must be the fuel of hell's merciless flames for all eternity. Ah! dear Christians, never be unmindful of the promises you made to Almighty God at your baptism; and if hitherto you have not been faithful to the renunciation you made in your baptism, now at least renew it, but let it be with greater sincerity than heretofore; say from the bottom of your hearts, I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy malignant suggestions; I renounce thy customs, laws, and maxims; I renounce all thy pomps, and grandeurs, all thy vanity, and false charms, which thou throwest

in my ways, thy deceitful riches, the vain pleasures of a wicked world, wherewith thou flatterest thy followers. It is you, O sweet Jesus, that I will henceforth follow; your maxims and laws shall be the rule to which I will conform myself, and it shall be by them that I will hereafter ever regulate my life and conduct. For these are sure guides, that whosoever follows, he cannot be led astray; and if you are faithful in following them, they will infallibly conduct you to the port of bliss

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost.
Acts viii. 17.

ALTHOUGH the sacrament of baptism confers, or gives grace to all men, and infuseth the holy spirit into them; makes them the children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, yet the devil, the mortal enemy of mankind, envying the felicity of those who are baptised, endeavors with all his force to rob them of the grace they received in the sacrament of baptism: wherefore, we all stand in need of new help and strength, that we may be better able to sustain the assaults of the devil; and for that end, another sacrament was instituted by our Saviour Christ; whereby new strength is given to such as are baptised, against the assaults of the devil, which is called the sacrament of confirmation. The which I shall endeavor to explain in part, in the following discourse; by first shewing that it is a sacrament, and that the apostles administered it to the faithful with wonderful effect; and that it was also the practice of the primitive ages to make use of this sacrament, which was held in great veneration amongst them. I will also explain to you the ceremonies contained therein

The sacraments of the new law, being visible signs, to which grace is annexed; so that none but God can be the author and establisher of such an institution; and though it is not certainly known at what time precisely this sacrament was instituted, yet we meet with an early practice of it in the Acts of the Apostles, (ch. viii.) when St. Peter and St. John went down to Jerusalem, to confirm those of Samaria, who had before been converted to the Christian faith, and baptised by Philip the deacon. The ceremony was performed by imposition of hands, whereby they received the Holy Ghost.

Here all things required to make a sacrament are to be found, viz., a visible sign, in the imposition of hands, and grace by conferring the Holy Ghost. We also find this promise of grace, in the sixteenth chapter of St. John, where Christ told his apostles, that when he should leave them, he would send the Holy Ghost upon them. And the performance of this promise appears again, in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, when the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles; as also again, in the nineteenth chapter, when those who were baptised, received the Holy Ghost anew, by the imposition of the apostles' hands; which is a clear proof that Christ instituted this sacrament; for it is certain that the apostles could not by such a ceremony, give the Holy Ghost, if Christ had not ordained it for that end. "Confirmation, therefore, is a sacrament instituted by Christ, to confer unto our souls the Holy Ghost, and an increase of our baptismal grace, to resist with a manly strength, and to encounter courageously with all our ghostly enemies, and to profess constantly the faith of Christ."

This the doctors and fathers of the church assert, "The flesh, (says Tertullian, L. de resur. carn.) is anointed, that the soul may be fortified." And Peter Damien witnesseth the same, in these words, speaking of confirmation, "The spirit is given in baptism as to pardon, but here to fight; there we are cleansed from iniquities, here we are fortified with courage." By which

words he declares, that the sacrament of confirmation was instituted by Christ to be administered after baptism, that every Christian may be fortified in the soul, with virtues, against the assaults of the devil. The same does Pope Melchiades, (who lived fourteen hundred years ago,) teach us in his epistle to the bishops of Spain: "I sought whether baptism, or imposition of hands, was the greater sacrament, but know that they are both great sacraments. In baptism, (says he,) a man is received to warfare, and in confirmation he is armed to fight; in baptism we are regenerated to life, after baptism, we are confirmed to fight; in baptism, we are washed, after baptism, we are strengthened." Which different gifts of each sacrament shined clearly in the apostles; who, although they were baptised, yet they were not endowed with that courage, as to be able to perform those things which a Christian ought to do. Therefore, Christ at his ascension did not exhibit them to enter the field of battle before they were confirmed, and made perfect soldiers, saying, (Luke xxiv. 49.) "Stay you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high." As if he would say, O my beloved apostles! although you are baptised, and have received the grace of the Holy Ghost, nevertheless, you are not strong enough to confess my name, nor sufficiently valiant, or able to overcome all the temptations of the world, and the devil; therefore, go not out to battle, my soldiers, before I send to you from heaven spiritual arms, wherewith you may be able to defend yourselves against your adversaries, and the snares of the devil. For, as St. Chrysostom says, no one suffers soldiers to rush forth into the midst of their enemies, before they are well armed; so neither did Christ suffer his apostles to appear in battle, before the Holy Ghost descended upon them. And these spiritual arms the apostles received from heaven, on the very day of Pentecost, as we read in the Acts: (c. ii. 2, 4.) "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost"

By which words, says St. Bernard, it is manifest, that the apostles were then confirmed with virtue and courage from above. Now, they fly not, says he, nor hide themselves, for fear of the Jews: now they are all zeal, all courage, and all faith.

The time was when they shut themselves up in a room, and durst not appear, for fear of the Jews; but now they open the doors, and in the public streets preach up Christ their Messiah; and this, not before a small number of pious souls, who would be glad to hear them, but before the worst of their enemies; and with so much freedom reproached their disbelief, and cruelty in crucifying the world's Redeemer, that they give evident proof they fear none but God. The chief of the Jews was enraged at their courage and boldness, and therefore charged them to preach Christ no more to the people. But St. Peter now, with a liberty becoming his zeal, asks them, if it be fit to obey them rather than God?

Since words have no effect, they add stripes to threats, and take them before the council, where they are severely whipped; but they, says St. Luke, returned with joy in their hearts, because they were thought worthy to suffer for Christ. Whence is this unusual courage and zeal? It is, dear Christians, from the Holy Ghost, from this divine spirit, who now rules in their hearts, for he gives new life to all who fight under him, and a more than usual zeal and virtue, to all those who receive any warmth from his divine fire.

Is not this encouragement enough to make you earnestly desire to receive this sacrament, this divine spirit, that his divine light may clear your understanding, and give you a true sense of your duty, and eternal interest; for he is the spirit of wisdom and understanding? That his fire may quicken your zeal, and inflame your devotion; for he is the spirit of piety? That he may be a strength to you, in time of persecution and trouble; that you may be neither oppressed by their multiplicity, nor sink under their weight; for he is the spirit of counsel and fortitude?

The enemies of the Catholic church, either neglect this ceremony entirely, or those who practise it, look not upon it to be a sacrament. The first pretend, that it was only a temporary ceremony, during no longer than the apostles' time; and that the effects ceasing, viz., the visible conferring of the Holy Ghost, the ceremony itself ought no longer to be made use of. But it is easily answered, that there is the same reason to continue the ceremony of confirmation, as that of baptism and the sacrament of the eucharist; seeing that it was always practised in the primitive ages, and handed down to us ever since. As to the effects ceasing, it is true, in regard of the visible descent of the Holy Ghost, the first establishing of the gospel only requiring that miraculous effect; but the invisible effect, and operation of the Holy Ghost, still subsists, as the ancient Fathers unanimously affirm.

Those who make use of this ceremony, but deny it to be a sacrament, allege, that it is no more than a catechising of children, and confirming them in their belief in a more solemn manner, after they are arrived at the use of reason. But in this they contradict the express words of scripture, whereby it is declared that the Holy Ghost, or grace, is given by the imposition of hands. They contradict the doctrine of the primitive Fathers, who not only call it a sacrament, but place it in some degree with the sacrament of baptism. Besides, how can it only be a ceremony to instruct children, and confirm them in their belief, after they are arrived at the use of reason, seeing that it was the practice in the primitive ages, to confirm infants as soon as they were baptised, and before they were capable of instruction?

Now, dear Christians, as the sacrament of baptism consists of two parts, viz., matter and form, as water, which is called the matter, and those words, "I baptise thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," which are the form: so there is also a matter and form in the sacrament of confirmation. The matter is the imposition of hands, and anoint-

ing with chrism; the form are these words, "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This matter and form is well grounded, both in the scriptures and constant tradition of the church. The imposition of hands, upon this occasion, is expressly mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles; (ch. xix.) and anointing with oil is a constant ceremony, both in the Old and New Testament, when persons are consecrated to the service of God. Kings and priests were anointed in the old law; and St. Paul makes mention of anointing; (2 Cor. i. 21, 22.) and the sick were anointed, as St. James orders, (ch. v. 14.) when the priests were called in to assist them at the hour of death. It is true, no express mention is made of anointing, where the scripture speaks of confirmation: but the constant tradition and practice of the church, from the very earliest times of christianity, justifies the ceremony. Tertullian says, "The flesh is anointed, that the soul may be consecrated." And St. Clement says, (In Decret. Pont. de Consec. Dist. 5.) "All must make haste without delay to be born again to God, (that is, to be baptised,) and then at last, to be signed and anointed by a bishop; as we have received from Peter, and the rest of the apostles have taught us, our Lord commanding it." Hence, it was always the custom to anoint those who were baptised, confirmed, and consecrated by holy orders, or lay in danger of death by sickness: and, therefore, St. Augustin calls confirmation the sacrament of chrism. L. 2. Con. cit. petit. c. 104.

The form of confirmation is answerable to the nature of the sacrament. The invocation of the blessed Trinity points out the power whereby the sacrament works its effect. The words *I confirm thee*, intimate the principal and proper effect of the sacrament, which is a strengthening grace. The sign of the cross imports, that the person who receives the sacrament has now engaged himself and put on armor, to be a soldier of Christ.

As to the minister of this sacrament, it appears, both from the

scriptures, the practice of the primitive ages, and the constant doctrine of the learned, that it ought to be a bishop. (Acts viii.) For Philip the deacon, and others employed in the conversion of the Samaritans, had already baptised them, but they did not undertake to give the Holy Ghost, by imposition of hands: for to perform this work, St. Peter and St. John, who were both bishops, were dispatched from Jerusalem. And wherever mention is made of this sacrament, in the writings of the ancient Fathers, the administration is said always to belong to the *Præpositi*, or chief superiors in the church; and namely, to those of the episcopal order. There is no occasion to allege any other reason for this ceremony, besides the institution, and the authority of the church; though it seems to be required, or at least very suitable to the nature of the sacrament: for the character conferred by confirmation being a kind of commission to fight under Christ's banner; and commissions being usually granted by the chief commanders of an army, the prelates of God's church are very properly appointed for that purpose.

Now as to the ceremonies performed in this sacrament, the first thing you are to take notice of, is the matter that is applied, which is twofold, viz., the imposition of hands, and oil, with the mixture of sweet balm. The imposition of hands betokens the inward spreading of the Holy Ghost, or grace of God in the soul, at the same time that the outward benediction is pronounced. The oil mixed with balm, which is called chrism, and blessed only by a bishop, puts us in mind of several spiritual advantages, to which it has an allusion. The properties of oil are to cleanse and preserve metals from rust, and was commonly made use of to render the limbs supple and active, when they are to shew their abilities by wrestling, and other performances of the body. This is an emblem of that spirit and liveliness, which a Christian ought to discover in the profession of his faith and duties of his religion; being an effect of the inward unction of the Holy Ghost. The sweet balm that is mixed with the oil, signifies the odor

of a good life, which diffuses itself by example and edifying behavior. A blow is given upon the cheek of those who receive this sacrament, to put them in mind of persecution, and the obligation they lie under to suffer all sorts of hardships, loss of goods, imprisonment, and even death itself, rather than forsake their religion.

A cross is made on the forehead, as the most proper place to express a Christian's behavior, when he comes to be questioned about his religion; for as the forehead or countenance is the seat of bashfulness, or resolution and firmness of temper, so the sign of the cross is made there, to signify that we neither will be ashamed of owning our religion, nor neglect the practice of it, out of any worldly consideration, or for fear of being ridiculed or pointed at by such as are but too apt to discountenance the humble methods of the gospel.

In fine, to take a short view of all the obligations that are incumbent on a Christian, upon account of this sacrament, you must consider yourselves as soldiers listed under the banner of Christ. By baptism you are made subjects, by confirmation you put on armor, and become companions. And farther, you are favored with a new character and commission, to maintain the cause of God and his church, both by words and examples. This is a proper reflection for all those who, being baptised within the bosom of the church, and have ratified the engagement in the sacrament of confirmation, are so unfortunate, as to harbor any thoughts of abandoning the house where they received their education, and spurning at the mother who gave them suck. If there are any instances of this kind, as it is to be feared there are but too many, how will they be able to bear the reproach, when at the hour of death they shall be called upon, and questioned concerning the obligations of this sacrament? How can they have the assurance to shew that forehead, which has been anointed, as a public testimonial that they never would forsake the cause they had undertaken? With what countenance can

they shew those cheeks, which were smitten in token of persecution, who have neglected the discipline of the church, and thrown away the cross of Christ, for the sake of ease and liberty?

All you, therefore, who have received the Holy Ghost, in the sacrament of confirmation, consider with yourselves, and see, whether or no you have ever been so ungrateful, as to banish him from your souls; if so, it is high time to wash off that stain by a sincere and speedy repentance. Have you never been deaf to his gracious call, by neglecting his holy inspirations, and resisting his grace? I doubt your consciences bear witness against you in this point. Resolve therefore effectually, from this moment, to be more obedient for the future. It is by the effects of this holy spirit, you are to be confirmed in your faith, be patient under all troubles, humble when provoked, meek when injured, peaceable with the contentions, compassionate on the distressed, and never tired in doing your duty, or suffering whatever is your portion. It is by this holy mover, you are to be directed in all you undertake, helped in your devotions, inflamed with the love of God, and supported in every obligation to yourselves or neighbor; so that, whether in time of prosperity, or adversity; whether in spiritual comfort, or interior darkness; whether in time of temptation, there is not one step you can take aright, in order to happiness, but as directed and moved by this holy spirit.

These, dear Christians, are some of the effects of this divine spirit, necessary for our guidance to eternal life; of which I shall speak more at large in the next discourse. I shall, therefore, conclude with exhorting you, to reflect and consider seriously with yourselves, how many ways you are apt to be deluded, both by fear and hopes, by the world, vanity, and self-love; how many dangers surround you, how little you know what is truly good for you: so that you cannot but see that the assistance of the Holy Ghost is continually necessary for you, and that you cannot possibly go on, with any degree of security, without the help of this guide, this light, this strengthener and comforter in a word,

without his assistance you are eternally lost. It behooves you then very much, earnestly to beseech this divine spirit to assist and heal your internal wounds, and to give you an increase of virtue in this life, that you may dwell for ever in his glory in the next.

DISCOURSE II.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Acts viii. 17.

I HAVE showed you, dear Christians, in the foregoing discourse, that this sacrament was instituted by Christ, to strengthen us in our faith, and make us the better able to resist the temptations of the devil, in whatever may be contrary to our belief in Christ; as also that the apostles administered this sacrament with wonderful effect, and that it was held in great veneration amongst the primitive Christians. I have likewise explained the ceremonies used therein. What therefore I intend in this discourse is, to lay before you the effects and necessity of this sacrament; as also show you how you must prepare yourself to receive it.

The general effect of the sacrament of confirmation is sanctifying grace, which all are made partakers of, who receive it with due dispositions. The particular and peculiar effect of this sacrament is, a strengthening grace, whereby we are made perfect Christians, and as it were fitted out, and furnished with what is necessary to comply with all the duties of a Christian, and defend ourselves against all enemies that can attack us. It gives a courage to behave ourselves manfully in time of persecution: it makes us stand upon our guard in time of temptations: it also inspires us with knowledge, courage, and zeal: witness the apostles and disciples, who after they had received the Holy Ghost,

their understandings were immediately elevated, to penetrate the most sublime mysteries of faith; demonstrating the truth of the Christian religion, from the predictions of the prophets concerning the Messiah; and this with so much force and efficacy, that the chief priest, and the most learned of the Jewish law, were astonished to see themselves baffled by those whom they knew to be poor ignorant fishermen. The most learned of the Jews were astonished at those wonderful effects of the divine grace in the apostles; insomuch, that they were at a loss how to contradict the preaching of those inspired men, whose doctrine they saw confirmed by manifest miracles; yet they were so far from being converted, that they plotted and caballed together, how to put a stop to the progress of the gospel.

What conclusion do they make after this conviction of their own consciences? No other, than to charge the apostles, at their peril, not to preach the Christian doctrine to any one living; a strange example of obstinacy in sin!

But now, what very much deserves to be taken notice of is, how dangerous a thing it is to let your wills get the start of your understandings, in the affairs of your salvation. And yet, alas! is not this common now-a-days? Are there none, think you, who are convinced of the truth of the true faith, and yet do not embrace it, because some temporal interest, some post of honor, to which their ambitious inclinations hurry them on, is inconsistent with the profession of it? But not to seek examples out of the church, are there no Catholics whose consciences tell them, do not engage yourself in such and such diversions, such and such affairs, such and such company; do not gratify this, or that passion, it is criminal, it is contrary to what both faith and reason require of you, and yet are weak enough to yield to the temptation? I fear we shall find a great number of these.

There is nothing that sets the effect of this sacrament, in those first preachers of the Christian faith, in a stronger light, than their undaunted courage, ardent zeal and fervor in promoting

the glory of God, and the salvation of their neighbor, as also their suffering with a spiritual joy, all the insults and affronts offered by the Jews, on account of their religion, and faith in Christ. They practised that important lesson, which the apostle St. James gives all the faithful: "Look upon it, (says he, c. xii.) as a subject of joy, when you enter into various trials and persecutions." St. Peter likewise says, (1 Ep. c. iv.) "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a railer, or a coveter of other men's things; but if as a Christian, let him be not ashamed, but let him glorify God in his name." You will say, no doubt, that these are proper examples for pastors, and such as are called to the apostolic functions. It is very true; but you must not imagine that there is nothing herein for you to imitate, because not called by God to his sacred ministry. Their zeal teaches you what you ought to do in defence of the faith they preached, remembering that if you are ashamed of Christ and his doctrine, he will disown you before the face of his Father. You are not, it is true, called to the priesthood, nor obliged to labor in preaching the gospel, and administering the sacraments; but you must remember you have no small obligation of earnestly promoting the conversion of your neighbors, by a zealous and edifying life. Happy then, and thrice happy too, are all those whose lives contribute to the conversion of a sinner; for, as St. James says, (c. v. 20.) "He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." And on the contrary, miserable are they who induce others to sin, either by words or example; such persons shall not only answer for the souls of those they pervert, but for the blood of Christ, which they cause to be shed in vain.

But to proceed: another effect of this sacrament is a character, which is in the nature of a commission, or spiritual power, conferred upon us, to fight the cause of God and religion. And as the character of a Christian, which we receive in baptism, cannot be lost, or taken from us, as being given immediately by God; so

neither can we be deprived of the character of a complete Christian, or soldier of Christ; and by consequence neither of these sacraments can be repeated, or administered twice to the same person, without injury to him from whom they receive their power.

In order that you may know how necessary the sacrament of confirmation is, you must first compare it with other sacraments; some whereof are necessary to the church in general, others to particular persons only. For instance, baptism is necessary for every individual person, for the remission of original sin. Penance, or repentance, is necessary for all who are guilty of actual sin; this necessity is called *absolute*, and will not admit of any excuse or dispensation in any circumstance whatever. The sacrament of the eucharist, and extreme unction, are also necessary for all persons, both by the law of God and the church; yet not so necessary, but that salvation may be obtained without them where there is not a wilful neglect. The sacraments of order and matrimony are not necessary for every individual person, but only to certain stations, viz., for those who engage in ecclesiastical functions, and those who are disposed to enter the married state.

From these considerations you may be informed in what manner the sacrament of confirmation is necessary, viz., by a divine precept, and the laws of the church; in the same manner as extreme unction is necessary. For certainly our blessed Saviour did not institute a sacrament for the benefit of the whole church, and at the same time leave persons at their liberty, whether they would make use of it or not. Besides, as every sacrament has a peculiar grace annexed to it, which cannnot be obtained by any other channel; and it is a criminal presumption to expect that effect by any other means, than what Christ has ordained for that purpose. The grace of making us perfect Christians, and a strengthening grace, to bear up with courage against persecution,

cannot be particularly ascribed to any other ceremony or sacrament, besides confirmation.

Hence it is, that in the primitive ages, when the heathenish persecution raged against the Christians, and that the bishops were either put to death, imprisoned, or sent into banishment, great lamentations were made among the faithful, not only for want of the good example and instructions they received from the bishops, but most especially, they deplored the absence of those persons, who were wont to administer unto them the sacrament of confirmation, whereby they might be encouraged and strengthened against the rigorous persecutions they were daily exposed to. It was upon this account, that care was taken to have little children confirmed immediately after baptism, lest afterwards they might not have an opportunity in those perilous times. This circumstance ought to be considered by all those who live in a country where the Catholic faith is not only discouraged, but the professors may be exposed to the most rigorous persecutions, when their enemies are disposed to let the penal laws loose against them. It has often been the case, even in our memory, and may be again, though we are very easy under the present government, whose lenity all Catholics ought gratefully to acknowledge. But among other things, which have occasioned a defection of many from the church, the want of respect, and they not having recourse to the sacrament of confirmation, may be mentioned, as one of the devil's stratagems to lessen the number of the faithful. For how can you expect to avoid the evil, without making use of the means to prevent it; or bear up against persecution, who willingly reject the grace that is ordained to support you on that occasion? Wherefore all parents and masters of families, ought to take care and see, that their children and servants are confirmed by a bishop, so that they may become perfect Christians.

You know that in natural things, certain dispositions are required in the subject, before the agent can produce its effect; so

we cannot receive the benefit intended by the sacraments, without due preparation. In relation to the sacrament of confirmation, it is in the first place required that a person be baptised; for without baptism you are not members of Christ's church, nor in a capacity of receiving any nourishment from the rest of the sacraments, unless you are united to Christ's mystical body; for a tree can communicate no nourishment to those branches which are cut off, or otherwise not united to it.

A second thing required is, the state of grace, without which no one can worthily receive this sacrament; and in order to this, every one that is admitted, ought to confess their sins with a true sorrow for having offended God. This obligation includes all those who are arrived at the perfect use of reason, so as to be able to distinguish between good and evil; and though seven years of age is the time usually mentioned, yet there being a great difference in the natural capacities of children, a judgment is to be formed of them, not so much from their years, as the tokens they give of their fitness and sufficiency. Formerly, indeed, this sacrament was conferred on infants, before they arrived at the use of reason; upon which occasion these preparations I have mentioned were not requisite; but this practice being partly laid aside, or at least not made use of, without consulting the prelates of the church; it is left to them to determine what necessity there may be of following it, they being the only judges of the case.

Let me put you in mind once more, that in case you have not preserved your baptismal innocence, to endeavor to repair it by a serious repentance, and a real amendment, before you approach to this sacrament; for "the spirit of wisdom (says the wise man,) will not enter into a soul ill disposed, nor dwell in a body defiled with sin;" no dear Christians, this spotless dove cannot set his foot in any place defiled with filth.

Another disposition is, that you must be at peace and in charity with every one; for the Holy Ghost, as the apostle assures us, is

the spirit of peace, and not of dissension. Again, you must quit your affections to this world; for the spirit of God, and the spirit of the world, can never dwell together. The world, it may be, would be willing enough to accommodate itself with the spirit of God, but the spirit of God can never agree with the world. The world is nothing but corruption and malice; the spirit of God is nothing but sanctity and goodness. The world is full of dissension and quarrels; the spirit of God breathes nothing but meekness and patience. The world teaches nothing but pride and vanity; the spirit of God inspires nothing but humility and modesty.

You see now, dear Christians, that in order to receive the Holy Ghost, you must separate yourselves, if not from the world, at least from the spirit of the world; you must separate yourselves from its evil maxims, its dangerous pleasures, its contagious follies, and its pernicious engagements; these are inconsistent with the spirit of God.

Lastly. You must imitate the apostles, who employed themselves in earnest prayer, before they received the Holy Ghost; as knowing the difficult charge they had upon their hands, the preaching of the gospel, and the conversion of the world, from all its evil ways, and yet so natural to flesh and blood; and knowing their own insufficiency for so great a work, they made pressing instances to heaven, from whence their assistance must come.

Were you but as sensible of your own wants, you would be as fervent in your prayers; did you but see the strength of your passions, and their danger; did you but see the snares of the devil, that lie in wait for you; had you but a just sense of the corruption of the world, and how easy you are drawn into it, you would importune heaven for succor and help, with as much instance as the apostles did: you would beg like them, for light from heaven, to enlighten you in time of danger, and grace to avoid the occasions of it; you would beg, like them, for patience to bear the difficulties of human life, and to submit to those trials,

which are the appointments of heaven, with a resignation becoming a Christian. You know Almighty God is good, and will not be wanting to assist you, if you refuse not to ask it as you ought; he will send his divine spirit upon you, loaded with blessings, viz., wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of our Lord, which are his gifts. Charity, joy, peace, patience, longanimity, goodness, benignity, mildness, fidelity, modesty, continency, and chastity, are the fruits he leaves behind him.

If you receive not these blessings, it is because your hearts are engaged in the interests of your passions, and you asked not God in earnest. Think seriously on this great misfortune, to be deprived of the divine spirit, and the sad consequences of it: beg now at least this one blessing, that this divine spirit would, by his light and grace, change this disorder, and move you so to desire his presence here, that you may be happy in it for all eternity.

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

1. Take ye and eat, this is my body, which shall be delivered for you.—1 Cor. xi. 24.

As there are seven planets in the heavens, from whose virtue and influence depend upon whatsoever is here upon earth; and among these the sun is as king, and he alone, by his own nature and essence, is clear and light, and the rest of the planets receive their light from him: so in like manner, in the church of God there are seven sacraments, from whose virtue all the safety of our souls depends in this life. But the blessed eucharist is the king of all the rest, and it alone comprehends in itself the sole

author of grace, and from whence the rest have their virtue communicated to them.

But, alas! there are numbers who endeavor to obscure and extinguish this light; which heretofore holy Simeon prophesied of the infant Jesus, saying, (Luke ii. 34.) "Behold this child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted." This we see now a-days fulfilled, in the use of the holy sacrament of the eucharist, for "it is put for the resurrection of many," viz., of those who firmly believe, that in the sacrament of the eucharist, is contained truly and really, the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ; and "for a sign which shall be contradicted," to all those who deny, that in the sacrament of the eucharist, is the body and blood of Christ: such are the Calvinists, and others, who do not believe, that the body and blood of Christ are contained in the sacrament of the eucharist, under the species or appearance of bread and wine: but that it is only a bare empty sign of Christ's body. The Lutherans, and others, although they believe that the body and blood of Christ are contained in the blessed sacrament, nevertheless, they say it is there, together with the bread and wine; so that they do not believe, that the substance of bread and wine is changed or converted into the body and blood of Christ. But the faith of the Catholic church is, that in the holy eucharist is contained, truly and really, verily and in deed, the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ, viz., that very same body, which was born of the blessed Virgin Mary, that very same body, which was crucified upon the cross, and that very same body, which is now in heaven, at the right hand of the Father. Moreover, our faith is that by the words spoken by the mouth of the priest at mass, who holds the place of God, that the bread, in a moment, is changed and transubstantiated into the body of Christ, and the wine into his precious blood; and that under either species a true, solid, living, and animated body, joined always to the divinity, is contained.

This we are taught from the types and figures of the Old Testament; this the prophets also foretold; this St. Paul and all the evangelists teach us; and this all the doctors of the church, in all ages, constantly affirm.

What therefore I intend in this discourse is, first, to prove to you the truth of the real presence, from the figures and prophecies of the Old Testament, as also from the epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. And, secondly, that the belief of the real presence, or transubstantiation, is no ways contrary to sense or reason.

That the figures of the old law do represent the eucharist, is manifest; for manna was an excellent figure of the eucharist, wherewith God fed his people in the desert: which in the scripture is called the bread of angels, bread from heaven, and heavenly bread. Therefore the eucharist ought to be a thing most excellent and singular; for the thing figured ought to be more noble than the figure or image: as for example, the person of a king is more worthy than the figure or image, which represents him.

Another figure of the eucharist was the paschal lamb; which, after it was offered and slain, was eaten with certain ceremonies by the Hebrews, as we read in Exodus, (chap. xii.) which signi fied, that Christ would offer himself, and afterwards give himself to be eaten; as when he said to his apostles, at his last supper, "Take ye and eat, this is my body." Matt. xxvi. 26.

But the sacrament of the eucharist was not only prefigured by types, but was also foretold by the prophets: and first, the royal prophet David, who foreseeing in spirit, how excellent food the Son of God would give to the children of the new law, rejoiced in heart, and sung forth, (Psal. xxii. 5.) "Thou hast prepared and set before me a table (to strengthen me) against those who persecute me." The prophet speaks not here of a corporeal banquet or table, because that driveth not away from us spiritual enemies that afflict us, but rather inviteth them; but he speaks, says St. Cyril, of the mystical and life-giving table of the holy

altar, which truly drives away the spiritual enemy, who afflicts and oppresses us. Again, the same holy David says, (Psal. c. 4.) "Our merciful Lord has made a memory of his marvellous works, he has prepared sustenance for all who fear him. He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord." But what has he done! He has prepared food, says holy David, for all those who fear him. He speaks not here of corporeal food, because he gives that even to his enemies; both to Jews, Turks, Infidels, and the like. But the holy eucharist is a short compendium of all the miracles of God; for in this sacrament are seen all the wonderful things of God, viz., a body in many places at once, and yet possessing no place; a body without extension of parts, impassable, not to be divided without diminution: in fine, a body spiritual and divine. Here do Catholics believe accidents to subsist without their subject, quantity without matter, color without substance. Here divines acknowledge an admirable action, a miraculous transubstantiation or change, which is as much to be admired as the very creation of the world. They here believe one substance to be changed into another, without corruption or generation. Therefore truly did the prophet say, (Psal. cx. 4.) "Our merciful Lord has made a remembrance of his wonderful works."

If we add to these figures and prophecies, the authority of the New Testament, it will appear most certain, that Christ at his last supper, gave to his apostles not the bare figure or sign of his body, but his true, real, and proper body. For as St. Paul declares, that Christ at his last supper spoke these words, (1 Cor. xi. 24.) "Take ye, and eat, this is my body, which shall be delivered for you." And the evangelists, although they wrote at different times and places, they wrote the same thing, to the same purpose, and in the same words; nor was there any of them who, in this institution, made use of the word, it *signifies* or *represents* my body. The apostles understood the words of our Saviour in a plain and literal sense; and thus the Jews under

stood him, when they cried out, (John vi. 53.) "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" If he had spoken only in a figurative sense, it had been easy to have told them so; for in other matters of much less importance, it was his usual custom to expound his meaning, as St. Mark assures us, (c. iv. 34.) but none of the apostles complained of the obscurity of his words, for they very well remembered what Christ had said to them before; (John vi. 52.) "The bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." Moreover, they observed that Christ said: (Matt. xxvi. 27.) "This is my blood of the New Testament;" by which words he signified, that he would leave them his body and blood, as a legacy in his last will or testament, to feed and nourish our souls, and as a perpetual monument of his affection. Now the words of a will or testament ought to be understood in their proper sense, as the words themselves sound; for if human testaments, or last wills, are to be understood in their proper literal sense, as human laws teach us they are, how much more did the apostles understand the Testament of Christ in its proper sense? If a prince, for example before his death, should make his last will or testament, wherein he left to such a nobleman such a castle, with all the lands and tenements belonging to it, and to each of his servants one thousand pounds a piece: now if after his death, his heirs should wrest, or turn the words of the testator to a figurative sense, surely this would have no effect with any judge. For if they should say, the prince left a castle with all its farms and lands, not in substance, but in figure only, viz., a picture, or painted castle and lands; and to his servants he left so much painted money; I am confident those persons would be esteemed very wicked men, who should dream of such evasions; and would be condemned for their injustice, in every court of judicature throughout the world.

And let me tell you, this is the very case of our adversaries, who say, that Christ did not give us his body and blood, but only the figure, or sign of his body; but alas! what is this, but to

mock and sport at the word of God? For St. Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians, (c. xi. 27.) proves plainly, that Christ did not give to his apostles a bare sign or figure of his body, but his true and real body; for he assures us that "whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord." Therefore, that this argument of St. Paul may have its full force, we must understand by the body and blood of Christ not the figure of them, but that very same body which the Jews crucified, and the self same blood which they wickedly shed. And surely no one will deny, or call in question, but that it was his true and real body that was delivered, and his real blood that was shed; and if so, by consequence it must be his true and real body and blood, which he gave to his apostles; for we have the same authority for one as for the other.

I cannot forbear admiring the weakness of some of our adversaries, who pretend that Christ is not really present in the sacrament, because St. Paul says, as often as you celebrate the holy mysteries, you must do it in remembrance of Christ. What! is it then improper to recommend the remembrance of what is present? Can any thing be more really and intimately present to every one than God? He is not far from every one of us, (says St. Paul, Acts xvii. 27.) and yet with how much reason does Solomon, in the last chapter of Ecclesiastes, call upon every one to remember his Creator in the days of his youth? The reason of this is, because what falls not under the senses, may easily be forgotten, and the remembrance of it is recommended. Besides, you must take notice, that what you are chiefly to remember is the death and passion of Christ, as we learn from St. Paul; the remembrance of which is no ways inconsistent with Christ's real presence in the sacrament: "You shall shew the death of our Lord until he come."

Before I proceed any farther, to prove the truth or verity of the real presence of Christ's precious body and blood in the holy

eucharist, it will not be amiss to prove, that this belief of ours is no ways contrary to sense or reason.

One motive why our adversaries think that their senses are imposed upon, is a false persuasion; because they imagine that when they see the sacrament, they are to believe that the outward form, the surface, and the qualities which they see, touch, or taste, to be the true body and blood of Christ. If this were so, then indeed they would have reason to cry out, and say, their senses were contradicted; but if they would but reflect, that all this outward form, the surface and the qualities, which we see, feel, or taste, are really in all respects, the very same as they are represented to our senses, and that no Catholic believes them to be the true body and blood of Christ, but only the veil which shrouds it, or hides it from our senses; that when we fall down on our knees to adore our Saviour Jesus Christ, whom we firmly believe to be really and substantially present, by a miracle imperceptible to all our senses, we do not adore the veil which shrouds or hides him from us, we only adore the God of our salvation, who in the mystery of the incarnation hid his divinity in flesh; and in the mystery of transubstantiation hides his flesh and blood, under the forms or appearances of bread and wine. If people would but seriously reflect, that what they perceive by any of their senses, is really and truly the same as they perceive, viz., that the exterior form of bread and wine are truly there, though not the inward substance of bread and wine; that faith does not oblige them to believe the contrary, but only to believe that under these outward forms the body and blood of Christ are hid and concealed from all our senses; then they would easily conclude that transubstantiation is not contrary to sense. For you must observe, that our senses only perceive the outward appearances of their objects, and that our understanding is the only faculty which can discern the inward substance. The naked substance of a body cannot be perceived by any sense, but because

it neither has dimension, figure, or color, nor any of those modifications which affect our senses.

Now I must needs acknowledge, that if when we receive the blessed sacrament, we saw it white, and yet believed it black; if we felt it rough, and yet believed it smooth; if we tasted sweetness, and yet believed it bitter; then no man could deny but that our faith taught us things evidently contrary to what our senses tell us. But as the case stands with us in this article, I cannot see how any thing but invincible ignorance can possibly excuse all those who charge us with the ridiculous absurdity of contradicting all our senses; when at the same time, we believe all that our senses represent unto us.

But it is objected, that after consecration we see the substance of bread, and we believe the substance is not there; is not this, they say, contradicting our senses? I grant, that after consecration we see the substance as plainly as we did before; but I absolutely deny that any man ever saw the substance of bread, either before or after consecration; for as I said before, all that is perceptible to the senses, is only the accidents or appearances of bread and wine, and this remains the same after consecration as before, so that the senses are not at all deceived.

If we believe that transubstantiation was a sensible change; that is to say, a change of any thing that is *sensible* in the bread and wine, then indeed our senses might easily give evidence against our faith, as being judges of sensible things: they might depose that nothing sensible is changed, but that all things sensible remain the same as formerly they were; and no man could deny but that our faith would then contradict our senses. But on the contrary, if we do not believe that *transubstantiation* is a sensible change, then it is certain, our senses not being judges of insensible things, cannot give evidence against us.

But some will perhaps say, that the substance of bread and wine are sensible things. To which I answer, that if by substance they mean something that is sensible, the Catholic church

does not mean the same; so that they mean one sort of substance, and the church another; for the Catholic church, by the substance, which she believes to be changed in the sacrament, does not understand anything that is sensible in the bread and wine; and therefore all their arguments, from evidence of sense, are levelled against a chimerical transubstantiation of their own invention, and not against that which the church has defined in the Council of Trent.

Again, it is objected that the mystery of transubstantiation seems impossible. It seems impossible, say they, first, for the body of Christ to be confined within so small a compass; secondly, for one body to be at the same time in two places.

It is strange, dear Christians, to see, when once people's minds are prepossessed with an aversion for any doctrine, how blind they are in their inquiries, how partial and unequal in their judgments. They easily believe the incarnation of Christ; and the reason is, because it is an article which they are willing to believe; so they make no doubt, but Almighty God's goodness, infinity, immensity, may be lodged within the compass of a man; and that this man, who lived and died amongst us, is the great creator and conserver of the universe. Why have they not the assurance to ridicule this mystery, and say, it is evidently contrary to reason, as the enemies of Christ's divinity do? Why do they not tell the world, that it involves a clear contradiction, to imagine infinity measured. Incomprehensibility comprehended, and immensity contained within the compass of a man? The reason is, because they like this article well enough, their education has not armed them against it. How comes it then, that in an age so sceptical, or incredulous in all things else, they are so positive, and so dogmatical in this point of the incarnation, at the same time they cry out, it is impossible for the body of Christ to shrink into the compass of a little bit of bread, or to be in several places at one and the same time? They can believe three persons, really distinguished, in one divine nature, and one person

in two natures, and yet they cannot believe one body in two places. Is not this straining at the lesser difficulty, and swallowing the greater? And had not our Saviour reason to complain of the blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel? Matt. xxiii. 24.

Now, if in the mystery of the incarnation and the blessed Trinity, our adversaries allow, that it is no argument of weakness, but of wisdom, to submit our judgments; why is it not so in the mystery of transubstantiation? For if they tell me, that the nature of God and the divine persons, are objects so spiritual, and so much out of our reach, that it does not become us to dogmatise in matters belonging to them; let me ask them, what knowledge they can have of a body divested of all its natural dimensions, and exalted to the condition of a spiritual body? And it is in this manner of being, that Christ's body is in the eucharist; for we do not apprehend Christ's body to be in the sacrament, after that gross, carnal, and corporeal manner, as when he was living upon earth. To conceive this aright, it must be observed what St. Paul says, (1 Cor. xv. 42.) that there are two very different manners of being proper to a human body, according to its different states; for it may be either corruptible or incorruptible, mortal, or immortal, natural or spiritual. Thus, St. Paul, discoursing of the manner in which our bodies shall be at the resurrection, says (1 Cor. xv. 53.) that "then this corruptible body must put on incorruption, and this mortal body must put on immortality;" and "it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body:" so there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

And though it be not possible to imagine how a human body, when it is in its corruptible, mortal, and natural manner of being, that is, so extended and gross as here it is, can be truly and really contained under the form of a bit of bread; yet when this same body has put on its other, more perfect manner of being, and is now become incorruptible, immortal, and even spiritual,

there is not then that difficulty of comprehending it; because being now become in its qualities like a spirit, and as a spirit requires no extension or greatness of place for its being, so neither does a body when it is become spiritual. As therefore it may be easily conceived how a spirit may be really under the compass of a wafer, so likewise may it be understood of Christ's body, which is not imagined to be in the sacrament in its corporeal and natural manner of being, but as it is incorruptible, immortal, and a spiritual body: and notwithstanding all this, it is his true and real body, the very same that was born of the Virgin Mary, the same that was crucified upon the cross, and the same that is now in heaven; I say the same in substance, but different as to its manner of being; for I am confident no one will pretend to say, that the body of Christ, which is now in heaven, is not the same in substance that was born of the Virgin Mary, and which died upon a cross, though it is now become glorified, incorruptible, immortal, and even spiritual. Under this consideration, several other difficulties may be resolved. And thus it may be easily conceived how it may be in many places at once; for though we cannot easily understand this possible to an extended body, and in its corporeal manner of being, yet there is no such difficulty in relation to a spiritual body, because a spirit hath no dependence on place; and it is evident that without local extension, a body is neither confined by being in one place, nor divided by being in two.

In fine, as the council of Trent teaches, Christ is not present in the eucharist, according to his natural way of being; so that he is there in a miraculous manner: and it must be owned that God, by his power, can do that with a body which is above the nature of a body to do; and what is done by the power of God above nature, is not to be tried by the laws of nature; nor are we to search for examples of the same thing in nature, which is done by the power of God above nature. And is it not agreeable to faith, to believe that God may do some wonderful things with the

body of Christ, which is united to a divine person? To be in many places at once; to be visibly at the right hand of his Father in heaven, and to be invisibly upon our altars at the same time, is one of those miracles which Christ does with his body.

Is it not highly reasonable then, that in the blessed eucharist, which the scripture informs us to be the subject of a miraculous power, we should not only enquire what the eyes see, and mouth tastes, but likewise what the word of God declares it to be; and so rather form our judgment of what we thus hear from God, than from seeing and tasting, since our senses are frequently liable to mistakes? Was not Mary Magdalen deceived, (Mark xvi. 5.) when her eyes told her it was a young man she saw at the door of the sepulchre; and her ears, from what she heard him speak? And after all this information of her senses, St. Matthew assures us, (ch. xxviii.) it was not a young man, but an angel in the likeness of a young man. The same difficulty may be made in the dove seen over Christ at his baptism, and the fiery tongues over the apostles at Pentecost; but the scripture assures us it was the Holy Ghost; and, therefore, we believe it upon the revelation of God, notwithstanding all the information of sense to the contrary. For to let our faith be directed by what we see, rather than by what we hear from God, is contrary to reason; because our senses may deceive us, but God cannot.

Thus, dear Christians, having given you some light to those difficulties, which are the common grounds, from whence arise all the doubts and disbelief concerning this mystery, I hope it may be an encouragement to reason and sense to submit to this divine truth; and consequently, full of admiration of God's goodness and mercy, cry out with St. Peter, "Let us shew forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into this wonderful light; which guides us through this vale of misery to the everlasting joys of heaven."

DISCOURSE II.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

Take ye and eat, this is my body.—Matt. xxvi. 26.

HAVING in the foregoing discourse shewed you, both from the figures and prophecies of the Old Testament, as also from St. Paul, what it was that Christ left his church in the holy eucharist, viz., not a figure of his body, but his true and real body: I likewise shewed you, that the belief of transubstantiation is not at all contrary to sense or reason.

What, therefore, I intend in this discourse is, first to shew from the clear text of the evangelists, and secondly, from the unanimous consent of the primitive fathers and doctors of the Catholic church, that the body and blood of Christ are truly, really, and substantially present in the eucharist.

It is now about two hundred years, or a little more, since those who pretended to reform the church of Christ, began to quarrel with her faith concerning the mystery of the holy eucharist: and the disputes then broached, have continued ever since. The Catholic church believes that in this mystery, after the words of consecration, are truly, really, and substantially present, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of Christ, under the outward form or appearance of bread and wine, and that by virtue of these holy words of consecration, is made a true and real transubstantiation, or change of one substance into another.

The adversaries of the Catholic church pretend that Christ's body and blood are not truly and really present in their own substance in the sacrament, but by faith only, and in figure; or, according to some, if it be there, it is accompanied with the substance of bread. Now both sides appeal to scripture; both sides profess themselves ready to stand to what is there determined. Let us see, then, which side the scripture favors, whether the

church affirming the eucharist to be the true body and blood of Christ, or her adversaries, denying it to be his real body and blood.

The institution of the blessed sacrament is related in three different evangelists, viz., by St. Matthew, (c. xxvi. 26.) by St. Mark, (c. xiv.) and by St. Luke, (c. xxii.) Here, dear Christians, we may expect to find something decisive in this point. Observe what it was that our Saviour instituted, and gave to his apostles at that time; for the sacrament which the faithful receive at this day, is the same which then the apostles received, as both Catholics and their adversaries allow. In the 26th of St. Matthew we read thus: "Whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to his disciples, and said, (observe his words,) Take ye and eat, *this is my body:* and taking the chalice, he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of this, *for this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins.*" St. Mark, in his fourteenth chapter, relates these words, as spoken by our Saviour: "This is my body, this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many." Much the same are the words of the institution, as they are recorded in the twenty-second of St. Luke: "This is my body, which is given for you, do this for a commemoration of me: this is the chalice of the New Testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you." And St. Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians, (c. xi.) says much the same.

Now, dear Christians, I appeal to any impartial judge, which side the scripture is on. Though our adversaries have the confidence to assert that transubstantiation is repugnant to the plain words of holy scripture; whereas nothing can be better proved by holy writ; for the scripture in no less than four different places, relates the words of Christ to be, "This is my body, this is my blood," or "This is the chalice of the New Testament in my blood." What can be more expressive and plain? particularly since he adds, that it was that body which should be delivered for them, and that blood which should be shed for many to the

remission of sins. Now give me leave to ask, was it not his true and real body which was delivered to die on a cross? Was it not his true and real blood which was shed for the remission of sins? It most certainly was; and yet he says plainly, this is that body, and this is that blood which he gives them.

Surely our adversaries cannot but see, that if our Saviour intended to change bread and wine into his body and blood, as we firmly believe he did, he could not have expressed himself in more plain terms, than by positively and directly telling us, "This is my body, which shall be delivered for you, this is my blood, which shall be shed for many." And if our Saviour had designed to give only an empty figure, excluding the reality of his body and blood, this manner of expressing himself would be exceedingly obscure and absurd, as I shall shew in the sequel of this discourse. That this expression is very obscure, if our adversaries' explanation be admitted, is sufficiently proved from the effect it has had, since all the Christian churches throughout the world, for many ages, have been induced to believe the very contrary to what our adversaries now assert; for they have constantly believed these words to import not a figurative, but the real presence of his body and blood in this august and adorable sacrament. It is indeed remarkable through the whole series of the gospel, that when our Saviour spoke any thing obscure in parables, he carefully explained it to his apostles; and this St. Mark assures us, (c. iv. 34.) that "when they were alone he explained all things to his disciples." But at the institution of the blessed sacrament, every circumstance required that he should express himself in the most intelligible terms: for when is it that all prudent men endeavor to explain themselves in the most plain, easy, and intelligible manner? Is it not when they are giving their commands of great consequence? Is it not when they are treating with, and taking their leave of their dearest friends? Is it not when they are making their last will and testament? Yet all these circumstances concur in the institution of this sacrament. He commands that clean ob-

lation, which the prophet Malachi had foretold, should be offered to God in all places: "Do you this, (says our Saviour, Luke xxii.) for a commemoration of me." He institutes a sacrament, the use of which was to be daily and perpetually in his church; he leaves his friends, (I will not now call you servants, but I have called you friends, John xv. 15.) whom he had appointed to teach all nations his gospel, and all Christian truths. In a word, he was settling a treaty, a covenant, an alliance, which was to last to the end of the world: could any circumstances be imagined in which a person ought more necessarily to speak plain and intelligible? No, certainly.

But to give these words of our Saviour, instituting the blessed sacrament their full force, and set them in their true light, you must observe, that when he designed to confer any very singular favor on his church, he usually foretold, and promised it, that they might more easily believe when he conferred any blessing. Thus he promised the sacrament of baptism, the power of forgiving sins: thus he foretold his passion, death, resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Holy Ghost. Thus in fine, he foretold and promised this inestimable benefit of the holy eucharist; his words are these, (in the sixth chapter of St. John, v. 52.) "The bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world." The Jews, therefore, strove amongst themselves, saying, how can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. Whosoever eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has life everlasting, and I will raise him up at the last day; for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed: he that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I in him." From these words of the Jews, "how can this man give us his flesh to eat?" it is evident they understood our Saviour's promise was to be fulfilled by really giving his flesh and blood: and our Saviour, far from mitigating his words, asserts in more positive terms, that except

they eat his flesh, and drink his blood, they shall not have life in them; and that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. These words were spoken in the presence of his apostles; so that when he told them at his last supper, "This is my body, which shall be given for you—this is my blood which shall be shed for you;" they could not reasonably understand it in any other sense than as he had promised, viz., that it was his real flesh and blood which he had told both them and the Jews were meat and drink indeed.

Again: would our Saviour, think you, who came to die for all mankind, and who commanded all his followers to avoid with all possible care, the least scandal, would he, I say, if he had spoken only of a figurative eating and drinking his flesh and blood, have omitted to explain himself, when he saw, not only the Jews, but even some of his disciples, so far shocked at his promise as to forsake him? No, certainly. Yet all these things were known to his disciples and apostles, and consequently they could not prudently understand our Saviour at his last supper, in any other manner, than as giving his real body and blood, under the appearance of bread and wine.

It is in vain to pretend to elude any of these texts, by telling me, it is usual in scripture, and common discourse, to give the sign the name of the thing signified, for this only happens when the sign naturally represents the thing which you name; as for example, when speaking of the king's picture, you say, this is the king; or in the explanation of parables, where every thing spoken of is considered as signifying some other; but when a thing neither naturally represents another, nor is known to be used as the representation of another, it is contrary to all laws of discourse, and highly absurd, to give it the name of what you intended it to signify, without preparing the minds of the hearers Now, as for bread, it has no natural resemblance of Christ's body, nor was ever used in human speech to signify Christ's body: how then do you think that Christ should be guilty of so great an

absurdity, as to call it his body, if what he gave them was really bread; and this, at that time, when every circumstance required that he should speak in the most easy, plain, and intelligible manner?

Nor do these other expressions of scripture, "I am the light, I am the vine, I am the door," &c., justify the figurative explanation of our adversaries. When in the eighth chapter of St. John, our Saviour says, "I am the light of the world," he adds, "He that follows me shall have the light of life;" when in the tenth he says, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved;" when in the fourteenth he says, "I am the way," he adds, "No man cometh to the Father but by me;" when in the fifteenth he says, "I am the vine," he adds, "He that abideth in me, the same beareth much fruit." Every body sees clearly what kind of light, door, and vine is meant. In like manner, when St. Paul says, (1 Cor. x. 4.) "The rock was Christ;" his meaning is obvious, for the whole drift of his discourse is to explain the figures of the Old Testament. Hence in the words immediately before that text, he calls the rock a spiritual rock; and after having mentioned the Israelites passing the Red Sea, the cloud, the manna, the water in the desert, the rock, he tells the Corinthians twice in the same chapter, that all these things happened (to the Israelites) in figure, and are written for our instruction. But as to the words of Christ instituting the blessed sacrament, there is nothing to determine them to a figurative and metaphorical sense; on the contrary, every circumstance excludes that explanation, as I have already proved.

But perhaps some one will tell me, supposing our Saviour be truly present in the sacrament, what need of allowing transubstantiation, or a change of bread and wine into his body and blood? Why cannot his words be understood literally enough, though he be said to give his body and blood in and with the bread and wine?

The answer is very easy for our Lord, in the words of the

institution, did not say, "In this is my body;" nor did he say, "Here is my body, and here is my blood;" as he should have said if he gave us his body with the bread; but he expressly said, "This is my body;" which words could not be true, without a substantial change of the bread into his body; since it cannot be truly said of bread, remaining bread, that it is the body of Christ As for example, when our Saviour changed water into wine, at the marriage of Cana, if he said, "This is wine," would it not have been evident, that these words signified a substantial change, of what was in the vessels, into wine? And is not the present case the same? Or if he intended to change bread and wine into his body and blood, how could he express his intention plainer, than by saying, "This is my body, this is my blood?"

Again: our adversaries object, that St. Paul calls the sacrament, after consecration, bread; (1 Cor. xi.) whence they infer, the scripture allows no transubstantiation in the sacrament. This argument will appear very weak, if you will observe these two things. First, the scripture, though it positively affirms the change of the substances, yet sometimes calls them by the name they had before their substantial change. Thus, though the waters were changed into wine at Cana, yet the evangelists call it water, made wine. (John ii. 9.) Thus, again, the scripture tells us plainly, (Exod. vii. 12.) that Aaron's and the magicians' rods were changed into snakes or serpents, yet after the change it calls them rods: "Aaron's rod devoured the magicians' rods." The second thing which I would have you observe is, that the scripture frequently gives a thing the name of what it resembles Thus because angels appeared in the resemblance of men, they are called men, both in St. Mark, (c. xvi.) and St. Luke, (c. xxiv.) and many other places. What wonder then, if St Paul calls the sacrament bread, since it bears the exterior appearance of bread, and was bread before the omnipotent hand of God changed it.

But now let us see the sentiments of the primitive fathers and doctors of the church on this subject.

In the second age, St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, a disciple of the apostles, who suffered martyrdom about the year 107, in his epistle to the Christians of Smyrna, calls the eucharist, "the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father raised by his bounty." Thus this disciple of the apostles, who certainly knew the meaning of their doctrine

In the same age, St. Justin, martyr, in his apology to the heathen emperor for the Christian religion, affirms, "That as our Saviour Jesus Christ was himself by the word made flesh, and took for our salvation both flesh and blood; so we are taught that the eucharist is the flesh and blood of the same Jesus incarnate." Apolog. 2. ad Antoninum. Would any man in his senses write thus to a heathen if he understood Christ's words in a figurative sense?

In the same age, St. Iræneus, in his fifth book (cap. 11.) against heresies, speaking of the bread and wine, says, "That by the word of God they are made the eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ."

In the third age, St. Cyprian, in his sermon of the Lord's supper, says, "The bread which our Lord gave to his disciples, being changed, not in shape, but in substance, by the omnipotency of the word is made flesh. He likewise says, (Lib. de Orat. Domini.) "that in the eucharist we eat Christ's body, and drink his blood.

In the same age, the learned Origen tells us, (Hom. 7. in Levit.) that "in the old law the manna was a figurative food (*in ænigmate;*) but now the flesh of God is meat (*in specie*) in reality, as he himself says, *My flesh is meat indeed.*" He speaks no less plain in many other places.

In the same age, Tertullian says, (L. 4. cont. Marcion. c. 40.) "That the bread which Christ took at his last supper, and distributed to his disciples, he changed into his body."

In the fourth age, the great St. John Chrysostom delivered in more clear terms the doctrine of the Catholic church. In his eighty-third homily upon St. Matthew, he has these excellent

words: "Let us every where believe Almighty God; nor contradict him, though what he says seems contradictory to our reason and sense. His words cannot deceive us, our senses are easily deceived; his words never err, our senses are frequently mistaken. Since therefore he says, This is my body, let us be persuaded of it; he who did these things at his last supper, the same now performs them; we are only his ministers, it is he who sanctifies, it is he who transmutes or changes these things." Thus far St. Chrysostom, whose words are equally plain in several places of his excellent works.

Let us now give ear to St. Ambrose, another famous doctor of the church, in the same age, in his book, *De his qui mysteriis initiantur*, chapter the ninth. "Perhaps you will say," says he, 'I see quite another thing; how do you assure me that I receive the body of Christ?' And this is what remains for us to prove. How great, says he, are the examples which we used to shew, that it is not the thing which nature formed, but the thing which the blessing has consecrated; and that the blessing has greater force than nature, because by the blessing even nature itself is changed." Afterwards he instances or makes mention of the change of rods into serpents, and of water into blood: and thus pursues his discourse: "If," says he, "the words of Elias were powerful enough to command fire down from heaven, shall not therefore the words of Christ be able to change the nature of the elements? You have read of the whole creation, he said and they were made, he commanded and they were created: the word therefore of Christ, which could make out of nothing that which was not, cannot it change those things which are, into what they are not?" Thus, St. Ambrose, not only proposing, but proving the doctrine of the Catholic church.

In the same age, St. Gregory Nyssen, in his catechetical discourse, professes the same faith. "I do believe," says he, "that by the word of God, the sanctified bread is changed into the body and blood of Christ."

In the same age, St. Cyril, patriarch of Jerusalem, discourses thus of the eucharist: (Cat. Mys. 4.) "Do not consider it," says he, "as mere bread and wine, for now it is the body and blood of Christ, according to our Lord's own words." Again, "Judge not the thing," says he, "by the taste." And a little after, "Knowing," says he, "and holding for certain, that the bread and wine which we see is not bread, although it taste like bread, but it is the body of Christ." What Catholic of this present age can express in plainer terms than this saint has done, our faith of transubstantiation?

In the fifth age, that great doctor of the church, St. Augustin, in Psal. xxxiii. says, "How David could be carried in his own hands we know not, but in Christ we do, for he was carried in his own hands, when at his last supper he gave to his disciples his own body and blood, saying, This is my body; for he then carried his own body in his own hands."

Every one of these fathers, dear Christians, which I have here quoted, lived above thirteen hundred years ago, and were certainly better qualified to know the sense of the scriptures, and doctrine of the apostles than those who came but lately into the world. And all the rest of the fathers, in all succeeding ages, unanimously agree in the same doctrine; so that this article of our faith is as ancient as the apostles.

I shall now conclude, by exhorting every one to "remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations, ask thy elders and they will tell thee. Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein;" for there is no other way which can conduct you safely to the joys of heaven.

DISCOURSE III.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

He that eateth this bread, shall live for ever.—St. John vi. 59.

In the two last discourses I proved to you, both from the scriptures, the holy fathers, and doctors of the church, the truth of the real presence of Christ's precious body and blood in the holy sacrament of the eucharist. What therefore I intend in this, is, first, to shew you that it is not necessary for the laity to receive the sacrament in both kinds, or under both species. And secondly, to lay before you the effects or benefits of this holy sacrament

The adversaries, dear Christians, of the Catholic faith, accuse us of defrauding the laity of the cup; for they teach, that all persons ought to receive the sacrament under both kinds, since Christ instituted it under both, gave it to his apostles under both, and commanded them to consecrate it as he had done; and that it was the practice of the primitive church to receive it under both kinds. Now the doctrine of the Catholic church is, that under either kind alone, Christ is received whole and entire, and a true sacrament.

Let us then examine what it was that Christ commanded at his last supper. For if he commanded that all should receive under both kinds, then all are bound so to do, and our adversaries have reason to cry out against us; but if Christ did not command it, then it is indifferent whether we receive it under one kind only, or both.

Christ at his last supper commanded his apostles, saying, (St. Luke xxii. 19.) "Do this for a commemoration of me." By which words Christ made his apostles priests, and gave them power to consecrate his body and blood, as he had done, which cannot appertain to the laity. Besides, it is to be observed, that he said this after the consecration of the bread, before he had begun with

the chalice, as both St. Luke and St. Paul declare; and therefore, if he commanded any thing concerning the kinds or species, in which we were to receive, it was of the species of bread that we should receive, and not of the chalice, which as yet he had not begun to consecrate. But the truth is, that he commanded nothing concerning the receiving under one or both kinds. For St. Augustin assures us, (Epist. 108.) that he left that to the church to determine, and appoint as it should think fit, according to the various conditions of times, places, persons, and circumstances, which might occur in the church, provided that she alter nothing pertaining to the nature or essence of the sacrament; and so the primitive church always understood it. What therefore Christ commanded was, that his apostles should consecrate, as he had done, and that they should give in substance the same which he gave, but not that they were to give it with all the same circumstances with which he gave it to them, as is manifest; for he gave it at supper, and that to twelve only. Now the primitive church did not give it after supper, but in the morning fasting; neither did they give it only to bishops and priests, who are the apostles' successors, but to the laity, men, women, and children. So that you see, the substance only of that which Christ then did, was commanded by him to be done afterwards. But for all to receive under both kinds, belongs only to the circumstances of receiving, and therefore it is indifferent. And although the eucharist is consecrated under both kinds, and is then necessary that it be received by the priest in both kinds; yet it is not necessary that all the laity should so receive it. For when Christ said, (Matt. xxvi. 27.) "Drink ye all of this," he did not speak to the people, but only to the apostles and their successors; for you will find in the gospel, that there were no other present. "He sat down with his twelve," says St. Matthew; (c. xxvi. 20.) "He cometh with the twelve," says St. Mark; (c. xiv. 17.) "He sat down, and the twelve apostles with him," says St. Luke, c. xxii. 14.

If, therefore, our adversaries will understand Christ's words, "Do this in commemoration of me," as a command for receiving under both kinds; it must be a command to some *distributively*, but not to the whole collection or congregation of the church in *particular;* for, as I said before, he only spoke to the apostles who were then present; so that it only appertains to them and their successors. Just as when God commanded, (Gen. i. 22.) saying, "Increase and multiply," he did not command all to marry, but only that it be observed by some, in order to fulfil the intent and end of marriage. And, therefore, the church has always appointed, that in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, (which is the public worship of God, and most special imitation of the last supper) the blessed sacrament should be received under both kinds, in imitation of Christ's action, and performance of his will, (for you must observe, that the eucharist is both a sacrifice and sacrament, and inasmuch as it is a sacrifice, I have explained in the decalogue, so that here I only speak of it as a sacrament;) but that out of Mass, both priests and people should receive under one, or both kinds, according to convenience of times and circumstances. And thus it was received by the people in the primitive church, sometimes under one kind only, and sometimes under both. For there is no command in the whole scripture for the people to receive the communion in both kinds. Even this the learned Bishop Montague, a zealous Protestant, was so sincere as to grant: "Where does the scripture," says he, (tom. i. Originum. p. 396.) "command that the people should receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper in both kinds? There is no scripture, says he, for this; the scriptures no where teach it." The Protestants in France are of Bishop Montague's opinion: for in a synod which they held at Poitiers, anno 1560, they decreed, that receiving the sacrament in both kinds, is not so far commanded, but that for a considerable reason, as to such who cannot drink wine, or the like, it may be profitable and lawful to receive under the species of bread alone. Therefore, according

to the Protestants' doctrine, the laity's communion under both kinds is not of divine precept; and so, by consequence, it is lawful for them to communicate under one, or both kinds, as the church shall appoint.

Besides, if to communicate under one kind only, be sufficient for the laity's obtaining everlasting life; then it is not necessary for them to communicate under both. Now our Saviour himself assures us in express terms, that to communicate under one kind only, is sufficient to gain everlasting life. "He that eats this bread shall live for ever," says Christ. (St. John, vi. 52.) And again, in the same chapter, (v. 58.) "If any one eats me, the same shall also live by me." So that you see, eating alone, without drinking, will suffice.

Again, if Christ and his disciples gave the sacrament in one kind, then it is lawful for us to give it in one kind; now it is thought from St. Luke, (c. xxiv. 30, 31.) that Christ gave the sacrament of the holy eucharist under the form of bread only, to two of his disciples at Emmaus: his words are these: "And it came to pass whilst he was at table with them, he took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them; and their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight." St. Augustin affirms, (L. iii. de Consens. Evang. c. xxiii.) that it was not material bread which our Saviour then gave his disciples; for by virtue, says he, of his benediction, he changed it into his body and blood, and by that action their eyes were opened to know him. And several others of the holy fathers understood these words of St. Luke, concerning the holy eucharist, as Dr. Pearson affirms, (in an. Paul. p. 34.)

Now, as to his disciples administering the sacrament only in one kind, we find from the acts of the apostles, (c. ii. 42.) where we read, that "they were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Again: in the 20th chapter of the Acts, "upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to

break bread." Here is no cup in any of these places; which are all expounded of the sacrament by St. Augustin, (L. xlix. de Consens. Evang. c. xxvi.) venerable Bede, and Theophylact, on the said places.

Again: it appears from the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, (c. xi. 27.) that the apostles sometimes, either administered the sacrament in one kind only, or at least judged it sufficient to communicate in one kind, if the church should so command it: 'Wherefore," says St. Paul, "whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, (the Greek word is ἢ πινῃ) shall be guilty of the body and blood of our Lord." Hence, if an unworthy communion, though under one kind only, makes a man guilty both of the body and blood of Christ; in like manner, in a worthy communion, though only under one kind, both the body and blood are received. But in order that the Protestant reader might not understand this, the translators of their bible thought fit to corrupt the text, which they have done in this manner, by putting in AND *drink*, instead of OR *drink*, as it is in the original. Thus, you see, our adversaries are forced to corrupt the word of God, in order to form an argument from scripture against us.

As to what our adversaries (who believe the real presence) object against us, out of the sixth chapter of St. John, (v. 54.) where our Saviour says, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you," I answer, that this imports a command, obliging the whole church, but not each particular man, and so it is fulfilled by the whole church, by priests receiving in both kinds, and by the laity receiving in one; because under either kind, we receive both the body and blood of Christ. It is not said, "except every one eat," &c. but "except you eat," &c. So when Christ said, "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," he did not command every particular apostle to teach and baptise all

nations, but that it should be done amongst them, according to their several allotments. So in the old scripture we read, (Gen. xvii. 11.) "You shall circumcise your foreskin;" and again, when God instituted the paschal lamb as a sacrament and sacrifice, he imposed two precepts: the one, "Let every man take a lamb," &c., (Exodus xii. 3.) the other, "And the whole multitude of the children of Israel shall sacrifice it." These were precepts obliging the whole synagogue, but not each particular man. For every one was not bound to circumcise, but such only as were deputed for that office. Nor was every one obliged to sacrifice the lamb, but only the father, or chief of the family; so this objection proves nothing against us. And as to Protestants, this objection does not sound well in their mouths, because they pretend, that those words of Christ were not spoken of the sacrament, but only of faith: but more particularly as they profess to receive neither the one nor the other, but only bread and wine by way of remembrance.

To come now to the grand objection of our adversaries, who say, that we rob the laity of the blood of Christ by denying them the cup, I answer, that this is a manifold falsehood; for both faith and reason tell us, that the living body of Christ cannot be without his blood, nor his living blood without his body; so that wheresoever Christ's body is, there is also his blood, for his body and blood cannot be divided, as being now immortal and impassable. "Christ rising again from the dead, (says St. Paul, Rom. vi. 9.) dieth now no more; death shall no more have dominion over him." Hence the faith of the Catholic church is that there is contained both the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ, under either kind or species: therefore, it necessarily follows, that the eucharist, distributed under one kind only, is not a lame or imperfect sacrament, since one sole species contains as much of Christ as both together, viz., all Christ entirely. Neither is a greater measure of grace conferred by the sacrament, precisely when it is taken in both kinds, than when it is only taken in one:

for as St. Paul says, an Israelite that gathered much manna, had nothing over, than he who gathered less: so a Christian who receives the sacrament under both kinds, has nothing more of Christ, or of sacramental grace, than he who receives it under one kind only, (if there be a parity as to the disposition of the receivers.) And as the church heretofore commanded the laity to receive in both kinds, so to exclude the Manicheans (who held the cup to be unlawful, and not the blood of Christ, but the gall of the devil) from the communion of the faithful; so now she commands them to receive under the form of bread only, to exclude and detect such heretics, as hold that Christ is not wholly contained under either species alone.

There are other reasons why all should not be bound to receive under all kinds; as, First, considering how soon wine decays, the sacrament could not well be kept, which would be necessary for the sick, if all were bound to receive under both species.

Secondly. It would endanger many irreverences of spilling the chalice, if all, both old and young, sick and lame, were bound to receive it.

Thirdly. Because some constitutions can neither endure the taste nor smell of wine.

Lastly. Because in some countries true wine is very hard to be met with. For these and the like reasons Christ would not bind all to receive under both kinds, but would leave the manner of receiving to the determination of the church.

We read in the writings of the holy fathers, that in the primitive church, the holy sacrament was received by the people, sometimes under one kind only and sometimes under both.

In the second age, St. Dionysius, (L. de Eccles. Hierarch. c. ult. & 4.) asserts the communion of infants under one kind.

In the third age, Tertullian tells us, (L. ad uxorem.) it was then a custom to carry the eucharist home to their houses, for private communion; which could not be done but under one kind:

because, as St. Athanasius affirms, (Apol. 2. cont. Arianos.) that chalices were not permitted to be in laymen's houses.

In the same age, St. Cyprian affirms, (Serm. de lapsis Nom. 10.) that it was given to infants, and to the sick, in one kind only.

In the fourth age, St. Ambrose asserts, (Orat. de obitu Satyri.) they kept the eucharist after consecration; and that his brother Satyrus, in a shipwreck, was miraculously delivered from the waters, by having the eucharist tied about his neck.

In the same age, Eusebius testifies, (L. vi. c. 36.) they were used to send the sacrament by sea into far countries; which could not be done but under one kind.

In the fifth age St. Augustin teaches (L. advers. Julian. Pelag. c. iv. & tom. ii. & in Epist. 106.) the practice of communion under one kind for infants.

And the Council of Constance, in the year of our Lord, 1415, has decreed against all such as rashly presume to say, (Sess. 13, 14.) "That Christian people ought to receive the sacrament under both kinds, &c. That as the custom of the laity receiving under the form of bread only, had been lawfully brought into the church for avoiding some dangers and scandals, and very long observed, &c., so it ought to be held for a law, which it is not lawful to reject without the church's authority."

Let us now see what are the chief effects or benefits of the holy eucharist.

The first is, that it is the food and nourishment of our souls, and the support of our spiritual life: hence our Saviour said, (John vi. 56.) "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." Wherefore, says St. Cyprian, he left us his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink, in order to nourish our souls.

The second is, to preserve and produce an increase of grace in the soul of the worthy receiver; as also an increase of Christian virtues, as faith, hope, and charity. This effect, however it be common to all the sacraments, yet it is more peculiar to this, as

being more particularly instituted for the nourishment of the soul, and to make it increase in a spiritual life. For as Christ himself says, (John vi. 58.) "He that eateth me, the same shall also live by me."

The third is, that by virtue thereof we may be united to Christ, and made, as it were, one with him: wherefore, our Saviour says, (John vi. 57.) "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." By which words he testifies the great love he has for us, in leaving us his body and blood, to feed and nourish our souls, and in order that he might unite himself more closely to us. But let us see, how by receiving the holy sacrament, we are united to Christ, and how we can be made one with him. You must not, dear Christians, imagine that the eucharist uniteth us with Christ, so as to make one person, nor is the body of Christ changed into our bodies when we receive it; we are made indeed like unto him by grace, but we cannot convert or change him into ourselves, as we do our corporeal meat; but by the communion of his body and blood, he is in us, and we in him.

The fourth is, that it remitteth venial sin, and preserves us against mortal. Wherefore, St. Ambrose says, that the eucharist is often received for a remedy against our daily infirmities, and that it makes us beware of mortal sin. Hence the Council of Trent affirmed, (Sess. 13, c. 2.) that this sacrament is a preservative against mortal, and a remedy against venial sin. It not only strengthens us against sin, but also against the temptations hich incline to it.

The fifth is, that it heals the distempers of the soul; that is, the passions and disorderly affections thereof. It weakens concupiscence, or gives new strength to overcome it. It diminishes choler, envy, pride, and other vices, as St. Bernard excellently well observes, (Serm. de Cœna Dom.) "If any one, says he, does not find so frequent, or so violent motions of anger, envy, impurity, or of other like passions, let him give thanks to the body and

blood of our Lord; for it is the virtue of this sacrament which produces in him these effects; and let him rejoice that the worst of ulcers begin to heal."

Lastly—The holy eucharist gives a right to eternal life; where fore, Christ said, (John vi. 59.) "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever." It also gives perseverance in the grace of God and in the way of salvation, in the midst of the various and imminent dangers which we encounter in this life, and particularly when we draw near death; whence the church always takes care to communicate the sick when they are in danger of death, that so they may be strengthened in that dangerous passage, and happily arrive at the haven of salvation by means of this divine nourishment, which is then called the *Viaticum;* that is to say, all things necessary for a journey.

These, dear Christians, are some of the chief benefits, and admirable effects of this divine sacrament, and ought effectually to excite and move you frequently to approach to it, and not to neglect so many and so signal favors as God there presents unto you. But you must take notice, that it does not produce these effects unless you are rightly disposed to receive it as it deserves. These dispositions I will explain to you in the next discourse, and so conclude with this admonition, as being the duty of the ministers of the church, to invite and exhort all the faithful to frequent communion.

There is nothing more edifying than to see the faithful flock to the foot of the altar upon this occasion. But then let me tell you, it is a terrible reflection to consider how little preparation is made for that divine work, how few there are that amend their lives by having recourse to it. Follow, therefore, the advice of St. Paul, be sincere in proving yourselves, and disclosing the secrets of your consciences; let your hearts be bruised by a true contrition for your sins; be steady in your good purposes; be careful in avoiding the occasions of sin; be just to your neighbor in restoring his goods and reputation; approach the holy table

with a clear conscience, both in regard of God and man, that nothing may deprive you of those blessings that are promised to those who worthily partake of those divine mysteries. Let not, therefore, either sloth, or any excuse, put you off from communicating at least once a month; since upon a frequent and right use of this sacrament, depends your happiness here, and your eternal welfare hereafter.

DISCOURSE IV.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Let a man prove himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice.—1 Cor. xi. 28.

From these words of St. Paul, you see, dear Christians, that it is necessary for all persons, as often as they approach to the holy communion, to examine themselves, and see whether or no their consciences accuse them of any mortal or grevious sin, and so to approach with the dispositions that are necessary for the worthy receiving this sacrament. For as holy David said, (1 Chron. xxix. 1.) when he was about to build a temple for the worship of God, "It is a great work, (says he) since it is not to prepare an abode for man, but for God." So, in like manner, all those who design to prepare themselves for a worthy communion, have far greater reason to say, it is a great work I am going about, since I am to prepare an abode, not for man, but for God. Oh! how great is this action? It far surpasses what David was about; it is not to build a material temple of brick and stone, for the worship of the Diety; but it is to prepare our hearts, that they may become fit temples for the Son of God to dwell therein. It is so to purify our souls, that there be nothing left there that may offend his eye. It is so to adorn our souls, that all there may be agreeable

to that divine purity which does us the honor to come to us. No doubt, dear Christians, this is a great work; but let me tell you, it is more than this; for it is so to purify yourselves, that Christ may be united to you, that he may be changed into you, and you into him, according to what he himself says, (St. John vi. 57.) "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him."

When you intend then to receive, you ought seriously to consider, it is a great work you have upon your hands; you are to prepare in your hearts an habitation fit for God, so adorned, and so perfect, that he may be united to you, and you to him.

Consider then with yourselves, do you think the God of all purity can be united to a soul whose affections are impure, or that is given to filthy discourse, or filthy actions? Can Christ, who is the pattern of humility and meekness, be united to a soul that is proud and passionate? Can he, who was obedient even unto death, be united to a disobedient, wilful, or stubborn heart? Can he, who bore all the scorn and contempt of the world, all the injuries and abuses of malicious men, and all the persecutions and torments his enemies heaped upon him, with an untried patience, be united to a soul that will bear nothing, that flies into cursing and swearing upon every provocation? Can the fountain of all justice be united to one that is unjust in his dealings, takes or detains what is not his own? Can the God of all sanctity be united to a heart where uncharitableness, or any unmortified passion rules? What communions must such persons make? How hateful to their Lord and God? Can there be any union, think you, between sanctity and Belial? These, instead of receiving that divine life, which Christ would communicate to thei souls, were they but duly prepared for it, receive their death they receive their judgment, and their own damnation; according to that of St. Paul, (1 Cor. xi. 29.) "He that eateth or drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself."

What then are the dispositions and preparations in order for

a worthy communion? These, dear Christians, are what I shall lay before you in this discourse.

The first and necessary disposition is, to purge and purify your souls from all mortal sin, by a hearty sorrow, and a sincere and true confession, so as to be in the state of grace. For the eucharist is of the number of those sacraments, which are instituted, not to confer the first grace, (which only belongs to baptism and penance) but to increase grace already conferred. And the reason of this is, because to be in the state of grace, is to be in charity with God and our neighbor, which is a thing absolutely necessary for communion.

The second disposition is, not only to be free from the guilt of all mortal sin, but you must also be free from the affections or inclination to all venial sins. What I mean by affection to venial sins is, such an adhesion to, or love of them, as to make a person not only commit them often, but also not to endeavor to avoid them; being so insensible of their malice, as to make little or no account of them. And although these effects do not render you absolutely unworthy, or the communion sacrilegious, yet they cause very ill effects, and considerably diminish the fruits, which otherwise it would produce in your souls.

The third disposition is, to approach the holy communion with a right intention. For it is certain, that an action, how good soever in itself, may lose its value for want of a good intention; and may even become evil and vicious, if the intention be such. This being true in all good actions whatsoever, it is still more in this of communion; since it is a contempt of the greatness and sanctity of God, to approach unto him upon any other motive or intention than that of honoring and pleasing him, and meriting his grace and favor.

As often then as you approach to the holy communion, let it be with an intention wholly pure; that is, your motive for so doing must be directed to the honor and glory of God, and your own salvation. 1st. To serve and please God the more, and

thereby to unite yourselves more strictly to him, that he may remain in you, and you in him. 2ndly, To promote your own salvation, by obtaining, through the means of a holy communion, all those graces you stand in need of; as to the amendment of your faults, to resist temptations, and to strengthen you in the practice of virtue. It is also good to add to this general intention some particular end, according to your present necessities: as for example, to obtain such and such particular graces you stand in need of, in order to correct in yourselves such and such faults, and to advance in some particular virtue. You must not, therefore, approach out of any human motive, that is, by proposing to yourselves an evil thing, as the motive or reason of your communion. As for example, out of hypocrisy, in order to dissemble and conceal some fault, with an appearance of piety; nor out of vanity to be esteemed virtuous; nor out of human respect, lest you should displease any one, or because it may be expected of you; neither must you approach purely out of custom, as being the usual time of your going to communicate. But, alas! it is to be feared these motives are but too common amongst those who are not sufficiently instructed concerning the intention they ought to have in communicating. The two first are the greatest faults, and commonly speaking, render the communion sacrilegious; the others deprive one of the best part of the fruit it otherwise would produce.

Now, in order to prepare yourselves for communion, the first thing you are to do after you have been at confession, is to return Almighty God your hearty thanks for the pardon of your sins; for certainly it argues a great insensibility or ingratitude, to make no return to him who has granted you so great a favor. Then turn your mind, and apply your whole thoughts to the great action you are about to perform, to make a worthy communion. And to do this, you are to endeavor to raise in yourselves actual devotion, and the most perfect you can; because in

this sacrament you receive more or less grace, in proportion to the greater or less devotion wherewith you receive it.

But perhaps you will ask me, what you must do to raise this devotion in your heart?

I will tell you, dear Christians. You must endeavor to cause it by raising in your minds acts of faith, acts of hope, acts of charity, acts of humility, joined with a pious confidence in your God.

First, consider with yourselves, who and what it is you are to receive. It is no less than the king of heaven and earth, the infinite majesty of God himself, veiled under the appearance of bread and wine. Think on this, and then call to mind all the mercies of your dear Redeemer, as he himself ordered you so to do, when he instituted this adorable mystery, the last great memorial of his love: "As often as ye do this," says he, "do it in remembrance of me:" in remembrance of what he did and suffered for you. Call to mind, the years, the days and hours he lived, and all for your sake, wherein not a day or hour ever passed but he often remembered you: call to mind the pains he suffered, and suffered them all for you: call to mind the last scene of his life, wherein he suffered a cruel death for you; and at the same time, by the invention of his kindness, as the prophet calls it, left you in this sacrament his own body and blood, for a remembrance of him, the dearest legacy, and the kindest pledge of his love. When you have considered this well over, it will, sure, raise some devotion in your hearts, and an ardent desire of this great sacrament. But you must remember that Christ increases his grace and blessing, in proportion to the ardent desires of the communicant, and always fills the heart that is open to him. The reason then, why some find not these interior comforts, and sweetness in their souls, at and after communion, is, because they are not thoroughly recollected, or are negligent in preparing their hearts for them. Christ is never wanting to us;

he comes to us as we come to him, and leaves his blessings there, where they are heartily desired.

Thus, you see, this sacrament is a continual monitor to you, to put you in mind of his love, of what he has done, and what he has suffered for you. And on the one side, as it is a great argument of his kind concern for you, so on the other, it is no small proof of your backwardness and insensibility, to stand in need to be thus put in mind of his favors and blessings.

Think then, Christian soul, if obligations can move thy gratitude, who has obliged thee like thy God? If advantages can win thy heart, what greater canst thou enjoy, than thou enjoyest in him? Or, if love can engage thy love, who loves thee like him? Who has, or will do, what he has, and will do for thee?

However, this great condescension and love of your Redeemer, ought not to make you forget yourselves; because he is good, you ought not to be presumptuous: you ought to consider who you are, as well as who he is. But now, that you may approach with that care and respect, as becomes the greatness of the giver and the gift, you ought attentively to consider the unworthiness, as well as the meanness of the receiver: mean indeed, no better than dust and ashes, formed from the earth we tread on; and must one day return again into the same mould. What profound respect is due from us! Nay, was this our only hindrance, were not we worse than God has made us, we might have more confidence. But alas; our ingratitude to all this goodness, the many sins we have committed, our present and daily imperfections, are a weight sufficient to bear us down, and humble us indeed in the presence of our God, and with just reason to cry out, how comes it to pass the Son of God comes to me, not in a ceremonious visit, but to live and dwell, and to be united to me! If the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less the little room, the poor habitation, I have made for thee in my heart! Consider this seriously, and you will not dare to approach this table without great purity of soul, and without employing what time you

can in preparing your hearts, by raising them in acts of virtue; that you may come with an interior, as well as an exterior decency to receive your Lord.

In some such manner as this you are to prepare yourselves, before you come to the altar to receive the bread of life; you are to entertain yourselves, sometimes with an awful fear, and apprehension of the sanctity of his person, and the greatness of his majesty; sometimes with hope and a pious confidence in his goodness; sometimes respect, and sometimes love; sometimes a desire of the great blessing, and sometimes an humble acknowledgment of your great unworthiness, and the like. That the excess of fear make you not too apprehensive, or too forward confidence cause you to become too negligent.

When the time of your receiving draws near, endeavor, in great peace and calmness of mind to increase the devotion of your hearts; and when the priest turns about to give you the general absolution, receive it with all the contrition of your soul, that you may communicate with greater purity. When he turns about again, holding the blessed sacrament in his hand, and says, "Behold the lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world;" and repeats thrice, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, but say only the word, and my soul shall be healed:" join in spirit with him, and repeat the same in your hearts, and endeavor to mix a profound humility, grounded on your own unworthiness, with a pious confidence, built upon the power and goodness of your God, who can make you worthy.

Having thus prepared yourselves, and having received the greatest blessing earth or heaven can bestow upon you; what are you then to do, or how are you to behave yourselves, after your communion? I will tell you, dear Christians.

After you have received the blessed sacrament, your Lord and Saviour, you must know he remains in person in you, as long as the species of bread remain entire in your breast, which it may

be about half or a quarter of an hour; after which time he ceases to be there in person, though he still continues by his grace, as long as you preserve yourselves from any consent to what is mortal sin. This sacrament is different from all the other six; the nature, or action of them passes in a moment; but this is a standing sacrament, and consists in a continual action, and gives grace as long as it continues: so as long as Christ remains in person within you, so long he is ready to give you his grace, and still to increase it, as long as you behave yourselves devoutly, and ask it as you ought. Therefore, suffer not yourselves, as the wise man says, (Eccles. xiv. 14.) to lose so good a day as this, and let not the least part of so precious a gift be lost. This you ought particularly to take notice of, and remember; for it is the ground of all your devotion after communion.

The first thing then you are to do after you have returned to your place, is to give thanks to Almighty God for all the benefits he has bestowed upon you; as your creation, conservation, redemption; your call to the Catholic faith, and particularly for this his great favor, in coming himself to you in this wonderful and condescending manner, which is to put you in mind of all the rest, what he has done and suffered for you; as he himself has told you, "As often as you do this, do it in remembrance of me."

After this, you may endeavor to entertain yourself with your Saviour, and to raise in your mind affections of respect, gratitude, and love; by considering the honor done you this day, and the treasure you have lodged in your breast. This part of your devotion being over, you may make your prayer to your Saviour now within you, and ask of him (for no time can be more favorable) what you want most: to be freed from this or that temptation, this trouble or that affliction: ask of him the virtue you stand in need of; patience, resignation, courage, or resolution, purity of heart, prayer, grace to comply with the duties of your state, and so much strength as never to be overcome by compli-

ance with company, or human respects, and the like. Lose not these precious moments, for none can be more favorable to you than whilst your Lord remains within you, to hear your petitions, and to grant your request; and be sure what you do ask, to ask from your hearts, for he sees into them, so that you cannot deceive him.

With these thoughts and resolutions, you depart out of the church or chapel, and think of them all the way you go home; and be sure to spend that day well, in reading and praying, and in some sober and pious conversation; lose no part of that happy day.

This, dear Christians, is the practice of communion, what you are to do before and what after: what you are to do to prepare your hearts to receive your Lord God, and how you are to entertain him after you have received him. Those who go to confession over night, or early in the morning, have greater conveniency to make this preparation, and it will certainly be rewarded by the sweetness and comfort Christ will give them in return; for he always comes to us as we come to him. Those who stay some time after, to entertain their Saviour, he will doubtless requite them, he will give them grace in proportion to their gratitude; he will grant them the favor they ask of him; for what can he refuse us, when he gives us himself? But such careless Christians, as take little time, either to prepare themselves, or to entertain their Lord after, lose very great advantages, which they might reap from a better preparation; and as they thus neglect God, it is to be feared he will neglect them, and withdraw the grace they carelessly abuse.

Be careful then in your preparation to this great sacrament: and be sure not to be wanting in your recollection, after you have received so great a blessing; every moment of that time well employed will deserve an addition of grace here, and glory hereafter

DISCOURSE V

ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

Lord I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.—Matt. viii. 8.

The humble centurion, coming to our Saviour Christ, exposed to him the weak and sickly condition of his servant, in these words: "Lord, my servant lies sick at home, and sore troubled with the palsy." He did not presume to beg the favor of our Saviour, that he would come to his house, nor even entreated him to cure his servant; he remitted both to our Saviour's will and pleasure. He knew he could heal him if he pleased, and would heal him if it were best; and therefore, with an humble submission, and yet with a lively faith, he barely laid open the infirmity of his servant. Our Saviour admired his faith, and told him, he would go with him, and cure his servant. "I will come and cure him;" but the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy, (of so great a favor, as) that you should come to my house; say but the word, and (I know) my servant will be cured."

Such were the pious dispositions that appear in the words of the centurion; his faith so lively, his humility so singular, his confidence in our Saviour Christ so rare, the sense of his own unworthiness so wonderful, that the church has judged his words, of all others, the most proper to express the devotion and sentiments we ought to have, when our Saviour is pleased to come unto us, in the holy sacrament of the altar. His words, for many ages, have been consecrated in such a manner, as to have been thrice repeated by the priest, to every one who has received our Saviour Christ, in the holy communion. No one, either priest, or laity, receives without first making use of the same words, *Lord I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my*

roof, that thou shouldst come unto my soul; *only say but the word, and my soul shall be cured*, shall be filled with heavenly benedictions.

We have all the reason imaginable to acknowledge with a most profound humility, that none of us, how virtuous soever, is worthy of so great a favor, that our Saviour and God should come to us, in this adorable sacrament. We have certainly just reason to imitate the dispositions of the centurion: to approach, not only with a great sense of our own unworthiness, but with a lively faith, with a warm confidence, with a grateful mind, and a sincere return of love to God, for so inestimable a benefit.

In order, therefore, to increase your devotion towards this sacrament, I will endeavor first, to lay before you the wonderful goodness and liberty of Almighty God, in leaving to his church this holy sacrament. and secondly, in a general manner, the happiness and advantages offered us in this sacrament, and which we are deprived of by seldom receiving, or approaching to it.

Many and great are the benefits which Almighty God has been pleased to confer upon man; and yet the distance between our infinite God and our mean condition is so great, that we cannot return him any suitable requital for the least of his favors; hence, we remain eternally indebted to him upon a thousand accounts, upon a thousand titles. He created man out of nothing, to his own image and likeness; he preserves him every moment from falling into his original nothing; he has commanded the sun, moon, and stars, to wait upon him; he has ordered the elements to be subservient to his convenience; he has given his command to the different seasons of the year, to furnish him with all desirable varieties; all living creatures he has made subject to him. For this, man shall remain ever in his debt. Yes, dear Christians, this is but the least part of his favors. He redeemed man when he had lost himself by sin; he has conferred upon him supernatural gifts, blessed him with spiritual favors, he offers him his sanctifying grace, a participation of his divine

nature and with it all the gifts of the Holy Ghost. All these infinitely increase man's debt, and are an additional overplus of the overflowing bounty of the Almighty towards undeserving man.

But if we take a thorough survey of the immense benefits he has liberally bestowed on us, in leaving us this holy sacrament, we shall find, that it is here his goodness seems to have outdone itself; it is here, that he transfers the whole treasure of heaven unto our souls. For to measure this benefit by the infinite dignity of the giver, and the mean condition of the receiver; it is here that the gift, and the giver, are both infinite, both the same, both God himself; so that in this sacrament we meet with a paradise upon earth; we meet with a heaven in every Catholic church, in every tabernacle, in every devout communicant. It is in this miracle of love, this excess of bounty, this memorial of himself, I would say, it is in this leaving of himself, that he has concentered or gathered together all that is good; that he pours out an ocean of bliss into our souls, and fills them full with heavenly benedictions. So wonderful has been his goodness towards man, notwithstanding his ingratitude; though he commonly receives provocations, injuries, and contempt, yet his infinite majesty stoops so low, as to make man his darling; for he declares, his delight is to be with the children of men. (Prov. viii. 31.) But what love, what bounty, can we ever discover comparable to this? He elected the Israelites to be his chosen, his dearly-beloved people; but what benefit did he ever confer upon them equal to this?

In the holy of holies, which was a more religious part of the tabernacle, and afterwards of the temple, he commanded them to place the ark of the covenant, the seat of mercy and atonement, and there he was particularly present, to hear their prayers and petitions. Doubtless, dear Christians, this was a singular favor, and such as never had been granted to any nation under the cope of heaven. But what is this to the benefit left us in the blessed eucharist? The ark was but a representation of the presence of

the divinity; in the eucharist, Christ God and Man is personally and really present: in the ark was the manna, a type, a bare resemblance of this sacrament, in which is contained the truth itself. Thus, you see, the benefits we enjoy in our tabernacle infinitely surpass theirs.

Yet, if you reflect, how different a respect he exacted they should pay to the holy of holies, what a subject of fear and confusion to yourselves? what an argument of love and thanksgiving to God will you discover? None but the high priest was permitted to enter into the holy of holies, and he but once a year, after he had sanctified himself, in his pontificals; and yet to this true holy of holies, all persons, at all times, have free access. Into our Catholic churches, every one, good or bad, have free liberty to come, and offer their petitions, in that place where God himself is personally present; a singular favor, indeed, which you ought always to be sensible of: a benefit granted to each particular person, far above the privilege reserved to the high priest. The high priest was but suffered to enter in, to contemplate, to be a spectator of the ark, the footstool of God, as the psalmist calls it: (Psal. xcviii. 5.) the rest of the Jews, both priest and people, were excluded from the sight of it; it was death for them to enter into the same apartment; but now every one of you are permitted, not only to approach to the tabernacle where the true God is really present, but have free liberty to receive your God into your breasts, to be in a manner incorporated with your Saviour: every man, rich or poor, nay, what is more, every sinful man, if become penitent, is permitted, invited in his nuptial garment, to receive the true God, infinite, immense, eternal, under the appearance of bread, for his spiritual nourishment. O unheard-of familiarity of God with man! The Almighty, by a miracle of love, is become the nourishment of his servants, his slaves! O transport of divine charity! O invention of infinite love towards ungrateful man! Let all men acknowledge, all mankind testify, their gratitude for such infinite love.

But, O blindness of man's heart! by daily use, to fall into inadvertency of these truths; it is a reflection I must insist upon. Had our Saviour left a power in his church to one priest, to consecrate once, in one place only, and that by this means he had vouchsafed to have been present, how unspeakable a benefit had it been? how far above our merits, how infinitely would the world have been obliged to him for it? But let us suppose yet more, that he had pleased to grant this power to some particular priests, of a consummate sanctity; if he had pleased to remain in some particular city of the world; to leave such a heavenly banquet in some one church, whither the faithful from all parts of the universe, might have recourse to pay due homage and worship to the divinity, there really present, and, if you please, there to receive their God in this holy sacrament: what a pilgrimage of devotion, and with good reason, would that have been, what crowds, what concourse? How happy would you think yourselves to partake of this banquet? How sensible would you have been of so inestimable a favor? How would the consideration of the real presence of God have recollected your thoughts in that church? Would the most licentious libertine have dared to commit an irreverence in that sacred place: how then would the thoughts of really receiving God into your breasts have inflamed your devotion, and set every communicant on fire? With what affections, with what aspirations, with what reverence, with what love, with what heavenly thanksgiving would you have entertained your Saviour? Would you not then have thought yourselves more happy the oftener you received? Would you then have judged a little part of a morning too long to prepare yourselves to receive your God? And now, since the bounty of God has been more liberal, what shame for you to be less grateful? You have now the presence of the same God; he has graciously left you this infinite immense treasure, not in a corner of the world, but in every Catholic church, upon every altar; he has given power to every priest to consecrate his precious body and blood: he

offers himself to be received by every Christian; he invites all to be partakers of this table, this feast of Angels. Nor has he limited this benefit to a time, but granted this infinite treasure to the end of the world. What blindness then to have less esteem, because the benefit is greater? What ingratitude, to be less thankful, because his bounty has been more liberal; to be less reverent, because your God is present in every tabernacle, not in one only? Not to long to receive him so often, because you have the greater convenience? With good reason then may I cry out with the devout author of the Imitation of Christ, O deplorable weakness of man, to have less regard, less esteem, because the benefit is more common and greater!

Let me exhort you, dear Christians, to correct this error, by reflecting on the truths, which by faith you are certain of. When you prepare yourselves for communion, you make ready an habitation in your souls for God; when you go to the altar, miserable, sinful dust as you are, you go, you kneel to receive Almighty God; there, by the hands of the priest, Almighty God comes really into your breasts; you return, but in a far different manner, bearing your God in your breasts. Can you reflect with yourselves on these truths, and not be struck with a sacred dread and confusion; and not be forced into a sweet love, and ardent affection? What strange insensibility, not to be moved with such mysteries? How frozen must your hearts be, not to melt at such a fire, such a miracle of love, such excess of goodness, so endearing affection, from the infinite person of God towards man? Does it not challenge love for love? His Divine Majesty yields to love, he lays aside all marks of power and greatness to meet with man; he puts himself under the appearance of bread and wine, that, by this means, he may unite himself to you, or rather that you may become one with him. Thus sanctifying man by such a union to the divinity; and you think part of a morning too tedious to entertain him, and spend here in his presence, and why? for should you consecrate your whole lives, spend all your

thoughts in acts of love, adoration, thanksgiving, for so inestimable a gift, what poor exchange would it be? His love to you in this adorable sacrament is infinite; all you can return is infinitely less, and of no value; his love towards you is without any merit on your side; nay, even when by your demerits you have deserved punishments, and not rewards; but all you can repay to him is but a return of his gifts: and can you then think much to allot some part every day to his service, to spend here in his presence.

The patriarchs and prophets, with longing sighs, and fervent desires, supplicated for his coming, with minds and hearts raised up to heaven; they begged that the long expected Saviour of the world would at last descend from heaven; and now the same Saviour of mankind remains with you, and yet you are unwilling to be with him; you think you do much if you prepare yourselves a little part of a morning to entertain the same Redeemer, for whose coming the world some thousands of years sighed, and begged that he would vouchsafe to descend, and come unto them. But now, alas! the same Saviour of the world descends, and is forced to beg of men that they would receive him, and that they will not often come unto him. O most divine Jesus! how low has thy love to every one of us made thee descend? Here love is carried to its greatest perfection, God himself courts man's love; notwithstanding he is so often basely treated, and betrayed by many a Judas, with a false kiss in unworthy communions; yet he has abandoned himself to all manner of injuries and affronts for man's sake; he is always ready in the tabernacle to be received by him; in fine, he waits on man, and when he is sick he comes and visits him in his bed, to be his protector in that dangerous hour, and to replenish his soul with heavenly benedictions. Come all and see, and partake of this prodigy of love; thank, praise, and bless him for ever for such a benefit; treat him as he deserves; that is, frequently partake of this feast of angels, to

which he invites you all. Happy souls, who frequently and devoutly receive this sacrament!

Let us now take a short view of the happiness of a devout communicant. Here you may rejoice, because in this sacrament you receive your God. This is in three words, the happiness I would speak of; thrice happy, because you receive your God; I will not, I cannot add any more; a bare consideration of this truth shall be all I will advance.

By receiving your God, you are united to the cause and author of all happiness. In other sacraments you receive some gift of his, some testimony of his divine goodness; but in the blessed eucharist you receive the origin of all goodness itself; in other sacraments some stream of divine grace; in this, you approach to the source and fountain from whence issues all grace. In others, you receive some help to salvation; in this, a Saviour. In others you partake of some heavenly benediction; in this, you have him really present within you, whose presence makes heaven really what it is.

If holy Simeon thought his happiness so singular, because he had at last seen his Redeemer, and once had him in his arms, that he could wish for no more, but weary, as it were, of the world, and desired to live no longer, how far does the happiness of every Christian surpass his, who hath the convenience, not once only, but as often as he pleases, to receive the same Saviour, not into his arms, but into his breast! If the whole church pronounces the evangelist St. John happy, because he once leaned his head upon the Saviour's breast; how much happier are you, dear Christians, into whose breast the same Saviour, as often as you will, enters! In fine, we look upon the great St. Joseph singularly happy, as with good reason we may, because he brought up and nourished our Saviour Christ; how much greater is your happiness, who are fed and nourished by the body and blood of the same Christ! Rejoice, Christians, I say rejoice, for your great transcending happiness.

As often as you communicate, you receive him whom the angels adore; you are really united to him, whose sight makes the angels happy. By receiving this holy sacrament, you have him really present within you, whose majesty the powers and thrones with astonishment adore; at whose presence the cherubims and seraphims, the whole celestial hierarchy, and the pillars of heaven tremble. But at the same time you receive likewise a most loving Saviour, a meek, liberal, and gracious Redeemer, and Almighty protector in your temptations, a sanctuary in all your dangers. Here the distressed find a comforter, the blind an infallible guide, the infirm an omnipotent physician, the penitent sinner his sanctuary; in fine, by receiving this holy sacrament, you receive Christ, God and Man; and what will he not grant you, who has given you himself? He comes not without his attendants; that is, plenty of graces, and heavenly benedictions.

If the blood of the paschal lamb, sprinkled on the doors of the Israelites, secured them against death and destruction, will not the blood of the immaculate Lamb of God, secure you against all the attacks of your enemies? He entered into the house of Zacheus the publican, and he and his whole family were blessed thereby; and will he receive less, into whose breast the same Saviour enters by communion? As many as had the happiness to touch the hem of his garment, were cured of all their diseases out of hand; what infirmity then shall not be expelled from that habitation, that soul, who receives her Saviour, God and Man, body, soul, and divinity, really, personally, and substantially, into his breast? Come, dear Christians, come to this heavenly banquet and you shall be sanctified; by your devout and frequent communions, you shall lose your infirmities, your inveterate habits, by this union to the Deity; you shall be no more the same, no more slaves to sin, and your passions; but Christ shall transform you into himself. It is true, you shall remain still attacked by temptations, assaulted by your enemies, the world the flesh, and the devil; yet against all these you shall come off victorious.

Would you but reflect seriously on these truths, you would not be so backward in approaching to your God in this sacrament, so unthinking of your own happiness, and so ungrateful to your bountiful Redeemer. The only reason I can find is, because you know not who it is that is present in the midst of you, it is true, you are undoubtedly certain of it by faith, yet you know it not; that is, you are as if you knew it not, you consider it not.

But oh! dear Christians, did you but know the favor granted you to appear in his presence; did you but consider the happiness you have here offered you; did you but reflect how nigh you are to your own felicity; did you but seriously call to mind with what facility you may partake of such heavenly treasures: did you but weigh the goodness of God that offers himself to you in this holy sacrament, the love, and longing desire he has you should frequent this holy banquet; there would be no hindering you from your happiness; you would answer his desires with the like affection; like as the wearied hart pants after the fountain to refresh his fainting thirst. There would be no need of the church prescribing times for your approaching to this sacrament, as now she is forced to oblige (4 Conc. Lateran. c. 25.) all the faithful of both sexes, who are come to the years of discretion, to receive the blessed eucharist at least once a year, and that in the time of Easter, under pain of excommunication, and being deprived of Christian burial. Now there is scarce any misery that can be inflicted upon a Catholic more dreadful, even to the libertine, than the thunder-clap of an excommunication; and yet he who defers long his communion, voluntarily in a manner excommunicates himself, freely undergoing the greatest penalty which the censure of an excommunication can inflict.

Some perhaps will say, they are not worthy to approach frequently. This commonly is the plea of a false reverence, and deceit of the devil. You are not worthy, you say, but why are you not worthy? Or will you be more worthy by deferring it longer, by seldom communicating? Oh no experience makes it

too evident to want a proof; he that does not communicate once a month, or thereabouts, will be less worthy after a longer delay. Let not those who approach frequently, but those who defer their communions, who seldom have access, dread to communicate unworthily. We see, when the primitive Christians communicated every day, how saint-like were their lives, how fervent their zeal, how active they were in their Christian duties. The Council of Trent wishes the faithful would now communicate as often; but at least frequently. We are passengers, strangers in this vale of misery, and therefore, have continually need of a refreshment: the blessed eucharist is our sustenance, our *viaticum*. Such is the frailty of our infirm nature, that whilst our souls are imprisoned in this terene habitation of the body, we are without intermission depressed with a proneness to evil, and therefore stand always in need of a remedy, an antidote; the blessed eucharist is this sovereign antidote, as the Council of Trent calls it We are at all times assaulted by too potent enemies for our weak strength; in the blessed eucharist we meet with an omnipotent protector.

But notwithstanding all this, the true reason why a great many Christians neglect to make a frequent use of this sacrament is, out of a slothful and careless temper, as being not willing to take the pains to prepare themselves. Others again excuse themselves, as being overwhelmed with business, that, alas! they have not time to pay their attendance upon their blessed Redeemer. There are others who excuse themselves upon a pretence yet worse than the former; those, I mean, who are strongly addicted to sensual pleasures, and they know that to become partakers of this holy table, they must renounce their criminal engagements; they must throw off their old habits, and enter upon a new course of life; but finding their hearts too strongly engaged to resolve upon a thorough change, they refuse to approach.

Thus you see how little the greater part of Christians are disposed to comply with our Saviour's earnest desire of communi-

eating himself to them. He invites, and they refuse to come; he offers them his precious body and blood, and they prefer each petty interest, or trifling satisfaction before him.

Let me now beseech you to settle a right esteem of the benefit and advantage you have of making your petitions here in his real presence, of frequently receiving him; it is a blessing and convenience which perchance you may not always enjoy; for how many pious Catholics are there in the world, who want and long for this convenience? Nay, I know that there are many in this nation who have not this happiness of receiving the real presence of their Saviour above once or twice in the year; would not they esteem the convenience you have more than you do, and make better use of this favor? It is well if they do not rise up in judgment against you, as the city of Tyre and Sidon against Bethsaida and Corozain, for neglecting so singular a favor, denied them, and granted to you.

But when you do approach, let it be with a right intention, purely to serve and glorify God; not for some bye motive, but above all with a good will, and not by constraint, because it may be expected of you, or out of custom, or the like. I know not whether there is any disposition more prejudicial to yourselves, or that looks so like ingratitude to Almighty God; for is it not a singular favor which he grants you, to permit you to pray in his presence? And will you ungratefully doubt whether the favor be worth your acceptance? No, dear Christians, far be this from you. Be sure then serve God with a willing heart: for as the scripture says, (2 Cor. ix. 7.) "God loves a cheerful giver." Be always grateful for the singular favor he grants you, by permitting you to enter into the holy of holies, and here at all times to pay your devotions to him; to expose with confidence your necessities to him; to assist at the great and daily sacrifice; always remember, and be grateful for the great happiness that is here offered you, by having free access to the holy sacrament of the altar; always be mindful of the inconceivable love your

blessed Saviour has shewed towards you, in leaving you the infinite treasure of himself in this banquet. Approach then to God, and he will come to you; that is, by receiving him in your communions, you will then receive him whose power is omnipotent; and what cannot he do for you? What will not he grant you? He will give you a pledge of your future glory in this life, and eternal happiness in the next: for "**he that eateth this bread shall live for ever.**" St. John vi. 59.

DISCOURSE VI.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

He that eateth or drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself. 1 Cor. xi. 29.

THERE is nothing, dear Christians, so surprising, or more worthy of astonishment, than to see that the most holy and adorable sacramant of the altar, the inexhaustible source and fountain of all grace, and the most sovereign remedy of all our evils, should be received by persons of all sorts and conditions, without producing in them that change of life which might be expected: and that our corporeal food should have a greater effect in feeding our bodies, than the bread of angels in nourishing our souls. But if we look into the cause of this, we shall find it is for want of those dispositions that are requisite, and the little care the generality of Christians take, in preparing themselves to receive this divine food.

Amongst those who approach to the holy communion, we may reckon three different sorts. First, there are some who approach with coldness; secondly, others with tepidity or lukewarmness: and thirdly, others with fervor and devotion, which becomes such as approach to this divine table. But, that you may understand my meaning the better, by such persons who are *cold*, I under-

stand those who approach to this holy table in the state of mortal sin; by the *lukewarm*, I mean such who have not laid aside their affections to venial sin; and by those who approach with *fervor*, I mean those who go with love, and the dispositions suitable to the holiness of this adorable sacrament.

I have already laid before you the advantages and great happiness of a worthy communion: what therefore I intend in this discourse is, first, to shew you that an unworthy communion is the most heinous and detestable of all crimes that can be committed; and, secondly, that there are many who are guilty of it.

The greatness and enormity of an unworthy communion is so much greater than that of any other crime, inasmuch as by it you directly attack the sacred person of Jesus Christ. Now to understand this the better, only consider the greatness of the crime of that subject, who should not only despise the laws and edicts of his prince, but should even attempt the life of his sovereign; would not justice seek out new torments to punish such a treason? And is not his crime, think you, infinitely greater, who endeavors to attack the Lord of Lords, and King of Glory? Such a crime as this, would certainly strike you with horror; and let me tell you, dear Christians, that the unworthy communicant is guilty of this; it is what St. Paul declares to us, (1 Cor. xi. 27.) "Whosoever," says he, "shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." This sentence is a thunderbolt, which ought to terrify all those who are so miserably unfortunate as to communicate in mortal sin; for he says, they are "guilty of the body and blood" of the Son of God; that is, they despise and treat injuriously this adorable body and blood, whilst they receive it into a profane place, into the temple of Satan, into a soul defiled with mortal sin. St. Chrysostom explaining these words of St. Paul, "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord," gives this reason: "Because, (says he,

Hom. 27.) whoever approaches to this divine table unworthily, is like those who pierced the body of our Lord, not to drink, but to spill his blood." That is to say, not to apply to themselves the spiritual fruit and benefit of it, but to profane it, and "trample it under foot;" according to St. Paul's expression in another place.

There is no person, that has any gratitude or love for our Saviour, that can think upon his death, sufferings, and torments, which he endured at that time of his passion, but would be struck with horror and indignation against those ungrateful and perfidious Jews, who put him to death. Nevertheless, I must tell you, (since both scriptures and fathers declare it,) though with horror, that the crime the Jews committed, in crucifying our Saviour Christ, only surpasses that which is now committed by every unworthy communicant. What can you say to this, unhappy souls, whoever you are, that have dared to commit such an heinous crime? Have you ever seriously done penance; or rather, ought not your whole lives hereafter, to be a continual series of sighs and lamentations for the enormous crime you have committed? Because wo to them who have crucified our Saviour; and wo upon those likewise who receive him unworthily in the holy sacrament. For let me tell you, that many amongst the Jews seem more excusable in crucifying their Messiah, than such wicked Christians who receive him in a breast defiled with sin; and though their crime was enormous, it may be said they crucified him whom they knew not; and when they knew him, they "returned confounded, striking their breasts," in sorrow for what they had done, as St. Luke testifies, (c. xxiii. 48.) But a Catholic Christian, as he cannot allege not knowing his God, so he seems more inexcusable than such of the Jews, who, if they had known him, they would not have crucified him.

If the apostle St. Paul, Heb. vi. (speaking of those persons who lose the grace of God by mortal sin) has declared that they crucified again the Son of God, and expose him to contempt,

what shall I say of those, who commit the greatest of all sacrileges, by an unworthy communion? Unhappy Christians, who make their bodies serve as another cross, upon which they crucify their Saviour! and though he does not die, yet their treachery is not less than the Jews, since they do what in them lies, to crucify him again.

"Consider, (says St. Chrysostom, Hom. 60.) what just indignation you conceive against him who betrayed Jesus Christ, and against those who crucified him, lest you also be equally guilty of the body and blood of the Son of God. It is true, they killed his sacred body, but you, after so many, and so often repeated benefits bestowed upon you, receive him into an unclean and polluted soul."

St. Cyprian says, (L. de Lapsis.) "That unworthy communicants offer violence to the body of Jesus Christ; and that this sin is a more heinous offence in the sight of God, than it is for a Christian to abjure him before infidels."

No Christian can call to mind, without a certain horror and aversion, the treacherous kiss of Judas; and can you be so insensible in your own case, as not to detest the same affront you offer Jesus, nay, even worse, if possible, when you unworthily receive him? Judas was the first who was guilty of this sacrilege of an unworthy communion; and all those who fall into it since, imitate his example, and become his disciples. They receive their Redeemer, as Judas did, in a guilty soul; they betray him, not indeed to the Jews, but, which is worse, to the devil, who dwells in them. What punishment ought they not to dread from such an enormous crime? Ought they not to remember, how that perfidious apostle was immediately possessed by the devil, in the moment he received Jesus Christ? For since they imitate him in sin, they cannot avoid being partakers of his punishments.

If human laws condemn a person to death for the murder of another, can he expect less than eternal death, who profanes the

body and blood of his Lord and Saviour? What think you, (Heb. x. 29.) says the apostle, does he deserve, who profanes the blood of the New Testament, by which he has been sanctified? Nor has this sin been without a particular chastisement, even in this life, according to that of St. Paul, (1 Cor. xi.) that upon account of their unworthy communions, many distempers reigned amongst those Christians, viz., the Corinthians, and that upon the same account many were carried off by sudden and unprovided deaths. The holy fathers of the church have not been less severe, in reprehending such persons who approach unworthily the holy table;* nor have they given this crime better terms than the apostle, since they compare it to that of the executioners who crucified our Saviour, or to that of the traitor Judas, who betrayed him into the hands of his mortal enemies.

St. Cyprian affirms, (L. de Lapsis.) that in his time there were many whose bodies were possessed by the devil, for having communicated unworthily; and also that many had lost their senses, and became distracted and mad, upon the same account. And St. Chrysostom also assures us, that the same thing happened in his time. This, dear Christians, ought to be more than sufficient to make you deplore the unhappy condition of those who communicate unworthily, and make you to dread the falling into that unhappy state. And yet, alas! this horrid sacrilege is very common in this our unhappy age.

I could wish, dear Christians, being persuaded as I am, and as you ought to be, of the enormity committed in an unworthy communion; I say, I could heartily wish that it were not possible to justify what I have said; but alas! the thing is too evident. I shall leave you to judge of the truth, after I have reckoned up some few of those who communicate unworthily.

There are some who criminally neglect to be instructed in the principal mysteries of our faith; and not knowing the excellency

* See St. Chrys. Hom. de Prodit. Judæ., St. Bern. Ser. in Cœna., & S. Basil de Bap. L. 2.

and dignity of this august mystery, yet they approach to this holy table out of custom, to receive this adorable sacrament.

There are others who frequent this sacrament at the feast of Easter, out of human respect, that they may not pass for wicked Christians in the eyes of the world, though they are such in the sight of God.

There are others who indeed communicate often, but it is only to get the praise and esteem of men, and to pass for persons of piety, though in the sight of God they are no better than downright hypocrites.

Others also go to this divine banquet without the wedding garment, I mean a purity of heart; and yet they have the boldness to eat of the bread of angels, which requires an angelic purity. It is true, they have been at confession, but they have not declared all their sins, either for want of a due examen, or else through shamefacedness or fear, having knowingly or willingly concealed some mortal sin; which alone is sufficient to make their confession null. But suppose persons should have thoroughly examined their consciences, and not concealed any mortal sin, yet how few are there who confess their sins with a true sorrow, and a firm purpose of amendment for the future?

There are some again who will not quit the immediate occasions of their sins, nor apply themselves with care and diligence to root out their evil habits; and this is the ordinary cause of frequent relapse. O God, the number of false penitents, and consequently of unworthy communicants, are very great.

We may add to these, all those who go to communion without having restored (when they had it in their power) what belonged to another: as also such who approach to this adorable sacrament with a heart embittered with gall and hatred against their neighbor. What I have here numbered up already, abundantly sufficeth to prove, that though an unworthy communion is the most enormous and detestable of all crimes, yet it is very frequent.

Can you hear these things without breaking forth into tears?

St. Bernard sighed and wept, when he reflected on the number of unworthy communicants at the feast of Easter, "What! (says he, L. de Lapsis.) is it possible that the time in which we commemorate the mysteries of our Saviour's resurrection, should be the time of an infinite number of sacrileges, committed by unworthy communicants?" Consider now, in what manner you have received the adorable sacrament: see if you have not at any time profaned this important action, which requires all our care and application to prepare ourselves for it. See also, if after your communion you have employed yourselves in thanksgiving for so great a benefit, and whether you have made use of so favorable a time to beg of Almighty God those helps which you stand in need of to preserve you from sin. See also, and examine, whether you have been that unhappy person who should dare to communicate in the state of mortal sin.

St. Chrysostom exhorting the people of Constantinople to communicate often, recommends to them above all things, a purity of heart in receiving this bread of angels. I beg the same of you, dear Christians, and conjure you by the love you owe to Jesus Christ, and the care and zeal you have for your own salvation, never to commit a crime so enormous as that of an unworthy communion; and if you have ever been so miserable and unhappy as to have been guilty of it, to pass the remainder of your lives in a series of penance, to expiate so great a crime; and resolve that you will never be so wicked as hereafter to communicate in the state of mortal sin.

If what I have said already be not sufficient to imprint in you as great a horror as I could wish, against an unworthy communion, let at least this terrible example which St. Cyprian relates, (Serm. in Cœna Dom.) of which he was an eye-witness, move you. "There was a woman, (says he,) who presented herself to receive the holy eucharist, but she was so far from finding the comfortable effects of this sacrament, that it was to her a mortal poison, which took away her life; for the precious body and blood of our Lord,

(says he,) remaining in her throat, choaked her, so that she immediately died upon the spot."

But it is not enough for us, dear Christians, barely to consider what this woman, and a great many others have suffered, but what we ourselves have deserved, if we have ever been so criminal as to approach to this holy table in the state of mortal sin: nor must you live in security, if your punishment be deferred; but on the contrary, look upon the vengeance of God hanging over your heads, to be so much the more terrible, by how much the mercy of God has waited for your repentance. For it is particularly of this great act of our religion, that those words of the holy scripture are to be understood, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully. Jerem. xlviii. 8.

Now, if to perform any holy action negligently, be so great a sin as to draw down the judgments of God, what dreadful judgments must those expect who communicate unworthily?

You must not think that I say this to retard you from approaching to the holy sacrament of the altar; no, on the contrary, I have too great a desire for the salvation of your souls, than to offer to deprive you of so great a blessing; and could wish that you would approach oftener than you usually do, provided it were with due dispositions.

I cannot conclude without once more laying before you, in few words, the dispositions with which you ought to approach to this holy table, which I cannot do better, than by the exhortation made by St. Paul to the Hebrews; (Heb. x. 22.) "Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with clean water." And thus disposed, let us not fail of approaching, with the sentiments of a holy fear and a profound respect for this adorable sacrament; for our God, says the apostle, is a consuming fire, which will certainly be your ruin, if you approach to him rashly; but rather look upon yourselves as persons who are entirely unworthy, saying not only with your lips, but from your

hearts, "Lord, I am not worthy." Strive then, dear Christians, to bring to this divine banquet the greatest purity of heart that is possible; lest the master of the family, finding you without this nuptial robe, should order you to have your hands and feet tied, and so cast into utter darkness, I mean eternal flames. Purify then your hearts not only from the filth of mortal sin, as you are obliged to do, but even from venial sins, to the end that you may avoid, not only the dreadful consequences of an unworthy communion, but also may partake more abundantly of the graces of this divine sacrament, and have a part in that great recompense which the Son of God has promised to those who shall eat this heavenly bread with holy dispositions.

DISCOURSE I.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish.—Luke xiii. 3.

THERE is no point of our religion better established, and more universally acknowledged, than the obligation of penance. It is the subject of our daily prayers; it is the constant theme of all instructions and sermons; and in effect, the whole business of the gospel; yet in regard of practice, no part of our duty seems to be less understood, and worse performed. Some place it entirely in the inward dispositions of the soul, others rely too much upon outward performances, and few enter so far into it as to comply with the practice of it as they ought. To remove, therefore, the mistake which may happen on this occasion, I intend in this discourse to lay before you the necessity of penance in general, and in what it consists. But before I proceed upon these two points, it will be proper first to prove to you in short, that penance is a sacrament of the new law, instituted by Christ for the remission of sins committed after baptism, whereby they who

are baptised are restored again unto grace, when they have lost it by mortal sin.

Penance may be considered two ways; as it is a virtue, and as it is a sacrament. As a virtue, it was always necessary, even before our Saviour taught his gospel, and instituted the holy sacrament; and according to this acceptation, divines define it thus: a virtue or gift of God, which makes us deplore and hate the sins we have committed, with a firm purpose or resolution to amend, and not offend any more for the future; and to punish ourselves, and make satisfaction for the sins committed. And here you may take notice, that repentance is not altogether the same as penance; for repentance is commonly used to signify the sorrow, and the change of life; but penance, over and above, includes the penal or penitential works, by which a true penitent endeavors to punish himself, and to satisfy, as much as in him lies, the divine justice, for the offences committed. Its principal acts are contrition, confession, and satisfaction.

As these three acts compose the virtue of penance, so they also make the parts of the sacrament of penance, which Christ has instituted upon this virtue, and raised to the dignity of a sacrament, when he gave to his apostles, and their successors, power to remit sins in his name, and by his authority.

The words of this institution are these, spoken by Christ to his apostles, when he appeared to them, on the day of his resurrection: (John xx. 23.) "As my Father has sent me, I also send you: receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." You see, dear Christians, by these words, that Christ gave to his appostles and their successors, a power to remit, and to retain the sins of the faithful. And is it not evident, that Christ has constituted the pastors of his church, the ministers of this power for the pardon of sin? Hear what Christ says in the 18th chapter of St. Matthew: (verse 18.) "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in

heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven."

Now, since Christ has instituted the pastors of his church the ministers of this sacrament, it evidently follows, that it is the will of God, they should administer it; and so it is the will of God, that the faithful should apply themselves to the pastors, by whom it is to be administered. And since the power given is of binding or loosing, of remitting or retaining, they ought to execute this power justly, that is, pronounce such a judgment as may be approved by God, and confirmed in heaven: this must be by remitting, when the sinner is truly penitent; and retaining, when he is unworthy of forgiveness. But how can they be capable of pronouncing justly, unless the case of the penitent be truly stated to them, and the dispositions of his heart made known to them? Therefore, since, by God's appointment, they are made the judges of our souls, by the same appointment they are to know what they judge; for a judge cannot give sentence in a cause if he knows it not; and this cannot be but by the confession of the penitent becoming his own accuser, and laying open his conscience to them. You see, therefore, that it is the appointment and will of God, that penitents should confess their sins, and open the true state of their conscience to the pastors of his church, that so they may judge, and that what they forgive on earth may be forgiven in heaven. This the apostle St. James declares in giving this general command, "Confess therefore your sins one to another." (ch. v. 16.) To whom then must this confession be made, but to those to whom Christ had given the power to hear, judge, and forgive sins?

But perhaps it may be objected, that it is going to man for the pardon of sins committed against God; and, therefore, it is forsaking God, and making Gods of men. To which I answer, it is going to the pastors of the church, as God has ordered us so to do; and to obey the orders of God, cannot be forsaking God, but seeking him, even according to his own appointment. Did

Cornelius forsake God, when by God's direction he addressed himself to St. Peter, to be taught what he ought to do? (Acts x. 6.) If, then, sinners are informed by Christ himself, where he has given power for the pardon of sins, to make application there for the pardon of their sins, it can be no more forsaking God, than to wash in Jordan for the relief of a distemper, when he himself has given direction for it.

I grant, the power of forgiving sins is a divine power; but will any one deny, that God cannot execute this power by his ministers, as well as immediately by himself? To suppose this power in man, as his own, and from himself, would be so far equalling him with God: but for man to administer this power in virtue of a deputation from God, is not to make him God, but only the minister of God. And in this there can be no surprise; for is not original sin, and sometimes other sins, forgiven by the sacrament of baptism? And is not that person, who administers baptism, the minister of that power by which these sins are forgiven? If, then, the forgiveness of sins, by the ministry of the priest in baptism is so easily allowed, why should it be made a subject of surprise and scandal in other cases where the power is more expressly given by Christ himself?

The Catholic church teaches, that Christ has left power to the ministers of his church, to absolve all sinners who truly repent. And this the Protestants themselves seem to understand in the same manner as we, since in their common prayer-book, in the order for the visitation of the sick, we find this rubric: "Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feels his conscience troubled with any weighty matter; after which confession, the priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this manner: Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thy offences: and by his authority committed to me, absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and

of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Therefore, for the future, I hope no Protestant will be surprised, call in question, and be scandalized at Catholics, who believe, and do no more than what they themselves have here prescribed in their common prayer-book.

There are some who deny this power, by pretending that Christ did not confer upon his apostles, and their successors, a power to forgive sins, but only a power to declare a remission of sins. Nothing can be more contrary to the plain words of the institution than this: for Christ did not say, whose sins you shall declare remitted, they are remitted; but he said, whose sins you shall remit, are remitted. Besides, to what purpose should Christ give such a power of declaring sins remitted, since such a declaration would effect nothing in order to remission of sins? So that a man to whom such a declaration is made, shall remain in sin, as much after the declaration as before. Again: Christ, after he invested the apostles, and consequently their successors, with the power of remitting and retaining, said to them, (John xx. 21.) "As the Father sent me, I also send you." Now it is certain, Christ was sent by his Father, endued with power truly to remit sin, and not only to declare remission of sins. Whereby it is evident, that Christ sent his apostles invested with power to remit sins, giving unto them, says St. Paul, (2 Cor. v. 18.) the ministry of reconciliation.

Again: penance has all the requisites necessary to a sacrament, viz., outward rites or signs, promise of sanctifying grace, and the institution of Christ. The outward and visible sign in this sacrament, is the confession of the sinner, and the words of absolution pronounced by the priest; for to the end that a crime may be remitted, reason requires that one should confess it, in order to make the quality of the crime manifest to him who is to remit it; and also, that he who hath authority to remit it, should pronounce the sentence of absolution, after he has judged concerning the nature of the crime. The grace promised, is the forgiveness of

sins; for sins cannot be pardoned but by grace. So that the acts of the penitent, and the absolution of the priest, compose this sacrament: whereof these acts are the matter, and the absolution is the form, which are the two parts necessary for a sacrament. We find the practice of this sacrament in the Acts of the apostles, (ch. xix. 18.) where we read, that the people came and cast themselves at the feet of the apostles, declaring or confessing the sins which they had committed. But more of this hereafter, when I speak of confession.

The sacrament of penance being thus proved, the next point to be considered is, to lay before you the necessity of penance in general.

St. John Baptist, the precursor of our Saviour Christ, began the work of his mission by exhorting all men to penance: "Do penance, (says he, Matt. iii. 2.) for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Our blessed Saviour himself shortly after, following his precursor in person, began his preaching the gospel with the very same words, as St. Matthew relates, (ch. iv. 17.) "Jesus began to preach, saying do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Thus our Redeemer himself, as well as his precursor, judged penance the most necessary disposition to prepare all men to partake of that great benefit of their redemption.

Again: we read in the second and third chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, that as soon as ever the apostles had received the Holy Ghost, and began to exercise their mission by preaching the gospel, the first admonition they gave to the people was, "Do penance, repent, and be converted." Should you, dear Christians, turn back to the preachers of the ancient law, and look into the commissions of so many prophets, whom Almighty God inspired with his holy spirit, and sent from time to time to instruct and admonish his people, you would find repentance, a conversion of heart, a reconciliation with God, to have been the constant subject of their mission. I need say nothing of the holy fathers, doctors,

and preachers of the holy Catholic church; serious penance, a sincere repentance, is what their homilies and sermons are full of.

Thus you see, (if the greatest authority have weight with you, as certainly it ought,) that the necessity of penance has been preached by the mouth of every prophet, urged by St. John Baptist, repeated by Christ himself, pressed by the greatest apostles, inculcated by the voice of the fathers and doctors of the church: such a number of unquestionable testimonies, and undeniable authorities, is more than sufficient to convince every Christian of the necessity of penance.

Let us now reason a little on this point. There are only two ways that can lead us to heaven, that of innocence, and that of penance. The state of innocence, or of original justice, all mankind lost by original sin, and though the guilt of that sin be taken away by baptism, yet the life of every one in this state of corruption, ought to be a life of penance; it is what the church declares, in the General Council of Trent: "The life of every Christian ought to be a perpetual practice of penance." It is no more than the express doctrine of our Saviour Christ, in the thirteenth chapter of St. Luke, (v. 3.) where he says, to his disciples, "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish." There is no Christian but will find himself indispensably obliged to a life of penance, if he considers the sins he has committed, the dangers he stands always exposed to; and, if he looks upon the life of our Saviour Christ, (which every one who pretends to be saved must,) as a pattern he should endeavor to imitate. Reflect a little on these reasons.

Wherein is that happy mortal to be found, who has not committed many sins in his life time, and who does not now offend, in some point or other, less or more, against the infinite majesty of God? Does not St. James expressly declare, in his Catholic epistle, (ch. iii. 2.) that "in many things we all offend?" St. John also tells us that "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." It is true, we are apt in

this kind to deceive ourselves, though not to such a degree as to make us imagine we have always been free from sin; yet our passions blind our reason; self-love makes us partial judges to ourselves, hides from us a great part of our failings, so that every one has just reason to say with the penitent psalmist, "Who is there that perfectly sees, and understands his own failings and sins?" Nay, the Holy Ghost assures us, in the ninth chapter of Ecclesiasticus, that "No man knows whether he be worthy of love or hatred," whether he is in the grace or favor of God, or no. Even the most pious, and virtuous Christians, are never absolutely certain, whether they are free from deadly sin or not; whether they are in the state of salvation or damnation. Since, therefore, such is the condition of every one, that he is certain he has committed many sins, and knows not whether he has deserved pardon for them or not: since he may reasonably judge that he has fallen into many faults, which in himself he has not discovered: since, in fine, he is always uncertain as to his present condition, whether he be in the favor of God, or no: has not, I say, every one great reason, upon these very accounts, to live always in the practice and exercise of penance? especially since, as St. Augustin observes, (De necessitate Pœnitent.) there is no sin but must of necessity be punished, either by our voluntary penance, or by the justice of God. For, as St. John says in his Revelations, "Nothing that is defiled with sin can enter into the kingdom of heaven." As all men, therefore, are sinners, all without exception must of necessity repent, and do penance for their sins.

Again: you ought to live always in the practice of penance, by reason of the dangers and temptations which, as long as you live you will always stand exposed to. Such is the weakness of our corrupt nature that we have always divers inordinate passions to struggle with and many depraved inclinations to fight against. Even the most virtuous, find by experience in themselves, a load of corruption, a very great backwardness to good,

and a propense inclination to evil. The spirit must always fight against the flesh, as the flesh, and its passions, always make war against the spirit, as St. Paul tells us. Gal. v. 17.

To say nothing of the other formidable enemies of your salvation, the world, with its dangerous principles, false maxims, and corrupt customs, which lead you to sin. To say nothing of the continual assaults of the common enemy of mankind, the devil, who goes always about laying his snares, and seeking means to draw you into damnation.

Now, in order to curb this inclination to sin, grafted in your very nature; to strengthen you against your unruly passions; to secure you against so many dangers and temptations, you are bound to live always in a continual practice of penance; so that it is with good reason that Tertullian says, (Lib. de Pœnit.) "Man is born to do penance."

Besides, it is in vain for you to pretend to salvation, unless you endeavor to imitate the example of your blessed Redeemer. "Those whom God has chosen," says St. Paul to the Romans, "he has decreed, and predestinated to be made like to the image of his Son." The life of Christ was a life of penance, though he had no sins of his own to satisfy for; he was only a sinner in appearance, and yet was a true penitent during the whole course of his life. You, on the contrary, are truly sinners, subject to many sins; and yet I am afraid, you are only penitents in appearance. Is this to follow his example? Is this to imitate the life of your Saviour? How different are your lives from that of the saints, who followed his footsteps in the like practice of a penitential life! They declared war against their passions; they fought manfully against their temptations; they fled the dangers of worldly conversation; they lived in a continual practice of penance, self-denial, and mortification; the more they advanced in virtue, their penance was still greater and more severe; their lives were more like to that of Christ. Can you then hope to be saved with them, and live after a quite different manner? They

had no other way to heaven but that of penance, and it is the only way for you to be saved.

These reasons, dear Christians, which I have hitherto insisted on, show that penance is necessary for all without exception; for good and virtuous persons, as well as for libertines and sinners. In the meantime give me leave to put you in mind, that they who know themselves to have been guilty of great sins, who have, perhaps frequently relapsed into the same disorders, who have lived in a custom and habit of vice; all such persons are under a much greater necessity and obligation of doing penance, and such a penance as may have some proportion to their past offences. A state of penance for them is altogether unavoidable; they must, nay, and certainly will be penitents, only it is now left to their own choice, whether here or hereafter; whether in this world or the next, that is to say, in hell. Yes, dear Christians, hell is as full of penitents as it is full of damned souls; sinners there heartily repent themselves of their past follies, and their past crimes; they must there undergo a most severe and endless penance for their past offences. Choose then your penance, if you can doubt or demur upon the choice; only remember that of the next world is a fruitless, unprofitable, insupportable, and eternal penance; but if you are for doing a short penance in this world, and yet such a penance as may satisfy the divine justice for your past sins, and secure your eternal salvation, it is necessary to examine in what this penance consists.

Penance, even as it is used in holy scripture, has different significations. It is often made use of to imply no more than a mere repentance; as in common discourse we say, that a man repents himself of what he has done; and thus, as I have already observed, the damned souls in hell are said to do penance; thus, Judas in the gospel is said to have been moved with penance, when repenting himself, for betraying his Lord and Master, he fell into despair, and hanged himself for it. Such a penance, therefore, though never so great, viz., mere repentance, is not

sufficient; it is indeed certain, that a true penance, such as will justify you in the sight of God, does always include a sincere repentance; for sinners must heartily repent themselves of what they have done; they must be sorry, detest, and abhor their former ways and proceedings; this is one necessary disposition, but this is not all.

Such a penance then as God requires at your hands, includes divers dispositions and affections of your soul; it must not only be joined with a true faith, and accompanied with a hope of receiving pardon, but also, of its own nature, it necessarily includes a change and conversion of heart. A sinner, who returns to God, must of necessity leave off the affections to sin; he must become a new man; he must put off the old man with his works, according to the expression of St. Paul, and he must put on the new man, which is according to the spirit of God. His affections, his actions, his life, his conversation, must be quite different from what they were before. This is what Almighty God puts sinners in mind of by his prophet Jeremias: (c. xxvi.) "Let every one be converted from his evil ways;" this is what he tells us by his prophet Joel: (c. ii. 12.) "Be converted to me with all your heart." True penance, therefore, includes an entire conversion of the heart, and such a change in the will, that the sinner leave off all affection to sin, especially to all mortal and deadly sin without exception; otherwise it is no change, no conversion, no penance, that avail anything.

Besides this, true penance not only makes the penitent separate his affections from sin, but also makes him firmly resolved to avoid all occasions of sin. A true, a sincere penitent, looks upon those dangerous occasions in which his frailty has been overcome, with the same fear and apprehension as a mariner looks at those rocks, shelves, or sands on which he has before suffered shipwreck, and been in danger of his life; and therefore is resolved to avoid them for the future. He looks upon his infirm will like a torch that is newly blown out, and which with every blast of wind takes

fire and flames again. Doubtless, such sinners as have had too much experience of their own weakness, cannot walk with too great caution; and if their penance and conversion be sincere, they must separate themselves from all immediate occasions and dangers of sin.

True penance includes yet another condition and disposition; that is, it must not only be accompanied with such a repentance, such a sorrow, detestation, and such a firm purpose of avoiding all sin, and all occasions of sin, such a change and conversion of heart as I have already mentioned; but it must also have a will of satisfying the divine justice by penitential works. A sinner who is truly penitent, thinks all he can do or suffer, nothing in comparison of what he has deserved by his offences; he looks upon the remainder of his life too short to make a reparation for the injuries he has committed against the Divine Majesty; he blesses the infinite mercies of God, who has preserved him from the jaws of hell, which he has so often deserved; and who has been pleased to change the eternal punishments due to his sins, into a short temporal punishment; and in hopes that the goodness of God will spare him in the next life, he is resolved not to spare himself in this.

I do not deny, but that a sinner may be reconciled to God by a true and sincere penance, before he has made sufficient satisfaction for his offences. A true penitent may be snatched away by death, when he has done, perhaps, little or no penance for many and grievous sins; he must expect a temporary punishment in another world: but in the meantime, there can be no true penance without a will at least, and a desire, which the penitent must have of repairing the injury done to Almighty God by sin; of satisfying the divine justice, and of punishing himself by works of penance and mortification, for the offences which he has committed. Hence you may understand several dangerous mistakes, relating to the necessary dispositions for the sacrament of penance Many persons are apt to imagine, that it is enough for them to

examine and confess the sins they are guilty of; this is to be done, but this alone will not suffice. Others, perhaps, besides this, use some endeavors to be sorry for their sins; such a sorrow is absolutely necessary, but neither confession nor sorrow for past sins, is sufficient to make a true penitent. Others, perhaps, join to these a purpose to avoid sin and the occasions of it, as they ought to do; but they think little of doing works of penance, worthy fruits of penance, to satisfy for their past sins, and preserve them for the future; without this, their penance is still defective.

To give you, therefore, a clear and full account in what a true and perfect penance consists, it must comprehend these dispositions. First—A sincere conversion of heart, by which the penitent is sorry for all the sins he has committed, as being contrary to the will and pleasure of Almighty God. Secondly—It requires an entire and exact confession of all the offences, of which, after a due examination, he finds himself guilty. Thirdly—It must be accompanied with a firm purpose and resolution to avoid sin, and the dangerous occasions of it. Fourthly—He that is truly penitent, must have an intent to satisfy the divine justice for his past crimes, and must make it his serious endeavor to join works of penance, self-denial, and mortification, and punish himself for his former transgressions. These are all necessary dispositions in a true penitent.

Reflect now a little, dear Christians, upon yourselves: has your penance been always accompanied with these conditions? Have you never been deficient in any of these points? Such a penance is, perhaps, what God has a long time expected from you. Remember, that the practice of a penitential life is absolutely necessary for you, whatever your lives have been: but if you have had the misfortune to be engaged in habits and customs of sinning, you ought then to reflect, that your penance must in some measure be proportioned to your sins: and let me tell you, that all you can do and suffer, can never make sufficient satisfaction and

atonement for the guilt of one mortal sin; you must, therefore, treat and punish yourselves as criminals, who have deserved endless punishments in the flames of hell, and whom the divine mercy has preserved, that you might punish yourselves by worthy fruits of penance.

But let me exhort you, that your penance be without delay; do not, upon any account, defer that penance, which of necessity you must do, either in this world or the next. You cannot do too soon what must of necessity be done, especially, since the longer you defer it, the difficulty will be so much the greater; your debts will increase, and with them an obligation of a more severe penance. Follow the admonition of the Holy Ghost, (Eccl. v. 8.) do not put off your conversion from time to time; do not delay your penance from day to day. The severest penance you can undergo, will all seem nothing to you, if you set before your eyes the punishments you have deserved, and that a short penance here will secure you an eternal happiness in the kingdom of heaven.

DISCOURSE II.

ON CONTRITION.

Be converted to me with all your heart.—Joel ii. 12.

The sacrament of penance, (as I have shewed you, dear Christians, in the foregoing discourse) is absolutely necessary for all sinners, who, by any offence against the Divine Majesty, have lost the first grace of baptism. It is for this reason called by the doctors of the church, a laborious baptism; that is, as the sacrament of baptism frees those who are born anew of water and the Holy Ghost, from that original sin which we were all born in, so the sacrament of penance (but with much greater difficulty on the penitent's side) is ordained to free sinners from

the guilt of those actual sins, which they have had the misfortune to fall into, by the perverseness of their own proper will. For this reason it is called by St. Hierom, (ad Demetr.) the second plank to save us after shipwreck; that is, if by our own neglect, and by our own fault, we have fallen into any deadly sin, and so made ourselves liable to eternal misery in the bottomless gulf of hell, nothing remains but the sacrament of penance, to relieve our souls, and to bring us to the happy port of eternal salvation.

Surely then you cannot but admire the divine goodness, and acknowledge your infinite obligations to your merciful God, who has offered you so easy a means to be reconciled to him (after you have been so ungrateful as to offend him,) and provided you with so sovereign a remedy for all your diseases. But alas! how many, out of a stupid blindness, make this sacrament of reconciliation a new act of condemnation against themselves! and though it is to be apprehended, that the number of those, who having laid aside all care and concern for their souls, totally neglect to make use of this sacrament, is very great; yet it is much more to be feared, that the number of those who abuse this sacrament, to their own ruin and destruction, through the want of a sufficient preparation, and due dispositions for receiving it, far exceeds the former.

Three considerations therefore are necessary, on the part of the penitent, to receive the effects of this sacrament, viz., *contrition* of heart, *confession* of mouth, and *satisfaction* of works. All these three are necessary, whensoever you pretend to make your peace with God, and be reconciled to him by a true conversion. Yet I am afraid, the most common effect which often makes penance unprofitable, and even criminal and sacrilegious in the sight of God, is the want of a true sorrow and contrition of heart. If we look into the common practice of Christians when they come to the sacrament of penance, we shall find that they spend the greatest part of that little time which they take to prepare them-

selves, in examining and finding out their sins; and then, if they confess what they remember, and receive absolution, they think all secure enough; whereas they ought to be full as solicitous, and take as much or more time in endeavoring to enter into the dispositions of a true conversion, a hearty sorrow, and a firm purpose and resolution of amendment. For it is certainly a much easier thing for a man to find out his sins, than to have a true sorrow, and a sincere conversion of heart; without which, instead of receiving any benefit by the sacrament, he adds a new sacrilege; he flatters himself with a false peace, a pretended conversion, and he returns more guilty than before.

There is no part of penance of greater importance than this of a true sorrow, which we call contrition. I shall, therefore, endeavor to shew you what contrition is, by the conditions which ought to accompany it. Secondly—I will propose some motives which every penitent may make use of, in order to obtain this necessary contrition, or sorrow for his sins, before he goes to confession.

A true sorrow for our sins, whether we give it the name of contrition or attrition, must of necessity be accompanied with these conditions; it must be interior, supernatural, universal, and sovereign; it ought also to be effectual. The council of Trent (Sess. 14, c. 4.) defines contrition, inasmuch as it is a part of the sacrament of penance, "a grief and detestation of the heart for sins committed, with a firm purpose and resolution of sinning no more." First—It must be interior; that is, from the heart; therefore, Almighty God says, by the mouth of his prophet, (Ezech. xviii. 31.) "Cast away from you all your transgressions, by which you have transgressed, and make to yourselves a new heart, and a new spirit." Many deceive themselves in this point; they imagine their business done, when they have read over an act of contrition or two, which they have in their prayer books, though in their hearts they still retain the same criminal affections to creatures, and cherish their darling passions as before.

They pretend to repent, and will say they are sorry with all their hearts that they have offended God; they will sigh, and give several exterior signs of grief, but all this is nothing if they come not from the heart; God will have no regard to them, they are no better than illusions; and such as content themselves with them shall have their portion with hypocrites; for our Saviour himself assures us, (Matt. xv. 19.) that it is "from the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, and blasphemies." It is to the heart, therefore, that this grief must penetrate, to destroy and abolish those works of darkness, the foulness of which floods of tears will not be able to wash away, if they have not their rise and beginning from the heart.

Take care, therefore, that your grief and sorrow for having offended God, be not in outward show and appearance only, which can only serve to delude you for the present, but will in the end prove your eternal ruin. Ah, dear Christians! why should you be so desirous to deceive yourselves, when you are certain to be losers by it, since you cannot deceive God, though you may impose upon your ghostly father?

The second condition that must accompany your contrition is, that it be supernatural; that is, it must be a sorrow and detestation for the sins you confess, inasmuch as they are sins and offences against the infinite majesty of God. It is not enough to be sorrowful for your offences, by reason of the natural deformity and baseness of sin, nor by reason of the shame and confusion which they bring to the sinner, nor from any temporal inconveniencies which may follow from sin as to this life; but it must of necessity be a sorrow which is grounded upon some supernatural motive, with a regard to eternity. A person, therefore, must not content himself to be sorrowful for his sins, because they make him guilty of hell fire; but he must make it his serious endeavor, that his sorrow be for the love of God. I shall not pretend to determine whether it be sufficient to detest sin merely for fear of

eternal punishments, and because mortal sin makes a sinner guilty of hell fire, or whether it be not always necessary that this sorrow be accompanied with the love of God above all things; I shall not, I say, determine, what the church has not decided. It is indeed certain, that a lively fear of hell and damnation is a good and profitable motion of the soul; it is a gift of God; and we may call it with the Psalmist, "the beginning of wisdom." But in the meantime, it is a certain and unquestionable truth, that every penitent sinner ought seriously to endeavor to be heartily sorry for all his offences, because they are contrary to the will of God, who has been infinitely good and merciful towards him; who is the source and fountain of all that is good, and who, upon a thousand titles, deserves to be loved above all things; especially since the apostle St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, (c. xiii.) assures us, that the most heroical virtues, even the severest martyrdom, is of no value without charity; that is, without the love of God; since the same St. Paul to the Corinthians, (c. xiv. 22.) again pronounces anathema, an eternal curse and separation from God, upon every one who does not love our Lord Jesus Christ. To insist only upon what our faith teaches us; your sorrow and grief for your sins, for having offended so good a God, for having forfeited his grace, and lost his favor, ought to be greater as to its effect, than any sorrow and grief for any other loss whatsoever As the favor of God ought to be esteemed above any temporal happiness, above all the goods of this life; and as sin is of all evils and misfortunes the greatest, so you ought certainly to hate sin above all things, to fear sin more than any thing else, and to prefer the grace of God before all the satisfactions and pleasures of this world; before any happiness which this life can afford. Without this disposition, you live in the affection to sin, and you want that true sorrow which is absolutely necessary to be in the grace of God.

It is true, you may be more sensibly afflicted for some temporal loss; you may experience a more feeling sorrow for the death

of a parent, friend, or relation, or some misery that happens to you in this life; but you cannot be in the disposition of a true sorrow and contrition, unless you be in a readiness of mind, and willing to lose all that is dear to you in this world, sooner than lose the grace of God, by offending his Divine Majesty; unless you fear and detest sin more than poverty, sickness, death itself, or any misery that can happen to you. There is no Catholic but is sufficiently convinced, that he ought to lose all that he enjoys in this life, and deny himself all the satisfaction this world can afford, sooner than renounce his faith and religion: and his reason, as well as his faith teaches him, that he ought in like manner to resolve to undergo all inconveniences whatsoever, rather than forfeit the grace and favor of God by any mortal sin.

Examine now the dispositions of your hearts and affections. Did you never come to the sacrament of penance, without this necessary sorrow, and hearty detestation of all deadly sin? Is every one, at this present, fully resolved upon no account to break the commandments of God, and his church, though it were to gain the whole world? You cannot pretend to look upon God as your chief good, unless you look upon sin as the greatest evil. Can you say with the prophet Jeremias, that your grief and sorrow for sin is above all grief and sorrow whatever? How far from these dispositions are all such sinners who shew so little concern for the grace of God, who live in such a coldness and indifference as to the state of mortal sin, who make so little account of offending God? They have frequently, perhaps, made use of the sacrament of penance, pretending to be sincerely converted to God, and upon every slight occasion, at the return of the next temptation, have forsaken God, to gratify their passions, for some short pleasure, or for some temporal advantage. Have we not just reason to fear, they never scarce had this hearty contrition, this supernatural and sincere detestation of sin above all things? The use, therefore, of the sacrament of penance to them,

has been nothing but a sacrilegious abuse, an increase of guilt instead of pardon.

A third condition which our contrition must have is, that it be universal; that is to say, extending itself to all mortal sins, without excepting any one; so that your sorrow for what is past, and your resolution for the time to come, must be without exception, as to the breach of any one of God's commandments. In this it is ordinary enough for sinners to deceive themselves; there are many persons who have divers good qualities, they perform a number of good works, they are free from many vices which others are subject to; but still they have some predominant inclination, some favorite passions, and those considerable too, which from time to time make them lose the grace and favor of God; and it is much to be feared, especially if they have contracted a custom or habit of such particular sins, that they do not sufficiently quit the affection to such vices, and they have too much reason to suspect their purposes and resolutions in regard of those offences. Thus, for instance, you may find many persons who shew piety enough in their prayers and devotions, they are good and charitable to the poor, they do justice to their neighbor in every respect; but as for intemperance, and excess in drinking, this is still their vice. Others abstain from drinking, from cursing, swearing, and detracting their neighbor; they keep all the other commandments, only they break the sixth; they are slaves to some spirit of uncleanness, either in words or actions. Others again live chaste, temperate, wrong nobody, but they have a wicked ungovernable tongue, lying, swearing, or detracting, has been long their practice; and they offend in this kind as often as the occasion presents itself. All these persons have divers good and commendable dispositions, but in the meantime they have some predominant passion which they never destroy. They are like the kings of Juda, whom we read in the third (3 Reg. xv.) and fourth (4 Reg.) books of Kings, several of them, as Asa, Josaphat, Azarias, and Joatham, are commended

for having done that which was right in the sight of God; but the character of each of them is with this exception, that they left some idols undestroyed. These are like Saul, who, as we read in the first book of Kings, having received orders from Almighty God to fight and destroy the Amalekites, without sparing anything that belonged to them, Saul fought and conquered them, but he spared Agag their king, and received the best and richest spoils. Almighty God was so highly offended at this, that he sent Samuel their prophet to acquaint Saul, that by his not obeying God fully, as he was commanded, he and all his posterity had forfeited the kingdom of Israel, and lost the favor of God. Thus God's command to every one is, that we utterly destroy all his and our enemies, without sparing anything that is displeasing in his sight. But alas! many there are who only obey him by halves, who always spare some favorite vice, as Saul did Agag, and by this disobedience they lose the favor and grace of God.

You ought to reflect that you must obey Almighty God no less in one commandment than in all the rest; you must destroy in your souls all his enemies, without reserve or exception; that is, you must equally detest all your sins, and make a firm purpose to avoid whatever is a breach of any of his precepts. Remember the admonition of St. James in his Catholic epistle, (c. ii. 10.) "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one *point*, is become guilty of all;" that is, he has as certainly lost the grace of God, and forfeited his title to heaven, as if it were by a breach of all. The reason is evident, because Almighty God equally commands them all; and, therefore, if a man complies only with some of God's commandments, and excepts others, he observes none as he ought, viz., for the sake and love of God.

A true and sincere penitent ought to use more diligence in raising himself to a hearty sorrow and contrition for those sins, which he knows himself frequently guilty of, in making a firm

purpose to resist those passions by which he has been oftentimes overcome; it is for want of this care that his sorrow is deficient, and the greatest and most dangerous enemies of his soul continue and remain undestroyed. Whensoever, therefore, you come to the sacrament of penance, you must come with a hearty sorrow and sincere detestation of all your sins, without exception; and you must use your chief endeavors to be sorrowful for those offences and failings which you find yourselves most subject to.

The fourth condition your contrition must have is, that it be sovereign; that is, your hatred and detestation for sin must be greater than for any other evil whatsoever. But here you must take notice, that when it is said, your sorrow and detestation for sin must be greater than for any other evil, it is not to be understood that it ought to be more sensible and vehement; for this is not required, nor is it always in your power; but it is to be understood that you esteem and look upon sin as the greatest of all evils, as it really is, and so firmly resolve for the future not to commit it upon any account whatsoever.

True contrition, besides these four conditions already mentioned, is likewise effectual. And if sinners find by experience that their contrition has no effect in order to a change and amendment of life, they have too much reason to suspect the sincerity of their sorrow, and firm purpose of amendment which they pretended to make. I do not deny, but that a person may sometimes fall, and relapse into the same disorder, yet not for want of a true and sincere sorrow, when he came to the sacrament of penance. A surprise, a strong and violent temptation, together with human frailty, may possibly overcome a penitent sinner, and change his will and affections, which before were sincere; but if from time to time, from confession to confession he still appears the same sinful man, still repeating the same mortal sins; if he presently returns to the same mortal sins, if he scarce ever resisted the like temptations, if he has not avoided the dangerous occasions of his sins, if he had done little or no penance for his past

offences, perhaps even neglected to make use of the remedies prescribed him; if, I say, this be his case, then both he and his confessor have great reason to suspect, that he was not before truly penitent, that he had only a half and imperfect will of sinning no more; in a word, that he wanted a true sorrow and firm purpose of amendment.

Reflect a little, dear Christians, on the matter. If a sinner, after having had the misfortune to lose the grace of God, by several offences, had been touched with a true repentance of heart if he had conceived a sincere detestation of sin above all things, if he had been resolved to die, rather than commit the same offences; is it likely that he would so soon, and so easily, have returned to the same sins, which is not so in other cases. When a person, for example, is practically convinced of the dangers, inconveniences, and miseries, which he had but lately escaped, and therefore has taken a firm resolution to avoid them and the occasions for the future: we do not find that he is so careless of his own safety and good; we naturally seek what we truly love, and we fly from what we sincerely hate and detest. If, therefore, you loved God above all things, and hated sin more than anything whatsoever, how is it possible you should so quickly forsake God, and return to sin?

Besides, the rule which our Saviour himself gives us, to judge of the dispositions and affections of our soul, is by the effects: the tree is known by the fruit it produces: "There is no good tree, (says our Saviour Christ, Luke vi. 43.) that bringeth forth evil fruit:" nay, he tells us, that a good tree cannot produce bad fruit. If, therefore, a sinner continues to produce bad fruit, if his works are still sinful, it is because the tree is bad, it is because the man himself, his will and affections are not changed, otherwise he would have brought forth good fruit. Thus, you see, the rule which our Saviour gives, to judge of the dispositions of the soul, is by the effects; and this is the best and most certain rule for

the penitent to judge of himself, and the confessor to judge of the penitent.

You cannot therefore rely upon your past sorrow, which has not been accompanied with any good effect, especially when after many and dangerous sins, no change of life, no amendment appears: it is then much to be feared, that an inclination to sinning, by a habit and custom, had prevailed upon the sinner's will, that notwithstanding those endeavors he made, when he came to the sacrament of penance, his affections were never changed, his contrition was ever defective, and served only to delude himself, and deceive his confessor. His absolution, therefore, in like manner, was to no effect, unless it was to increase his guilt, and that of his easy and indulgent confessor. For you must observe, that it is a point of faith, that it is not in the power of a priest, bishop, or pope, to absolve and forgive sins, unless the penitent be truly disposed by a hearty sorrow and purpose of amendment.

But to close up this point, let every one resolve with himself, never to approach to the sacrament of penance, without first making it his chief endeavor to have a true contrition; that is, to be sorry from the bottom of his heart for all his sins and offences, with a full and firm purpose to avoid them for the future. This sorrow must be interior, that is, from the heart. It must be supernatural, grounded upon the fear of God, and joined with the love of God above all things. It must be universal, extending to all your sins, and occasions of sin, without exception, or reserve. It must be also sovereign; that is, your hatred and detestation for sin must be greater, than for any other evil whatsoever. In fine, it ought to be effectual and constant, such as may shew a change and amendment of life. St. Gregory tells us, that to do penance is to deplore and lament the sins we have committed, and not to commit again what before we deplored. But in order to obtain this necessary contrition, I will now propose some motives for the instruction of every one.

It is to be feared, that there are several persons who have con-

trition in their books, and yet want it in their hearts: I mean that there are many persons in the world, who, before they come to confession, run over, after a customary manner, an act of contrition printed in their prayer books; and we may say of them, what our Saviour said of the scribes and pharisees, "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." (Matt. xv. 8.) It is quite a different thing to say, or think in one's mind, I am heartily sorry for my sins and offences, and I purpose by the grace of God, to avoid them for the time to come; and to have these dispositions fixed in the will and in the heart: contrition may be in your mouths, and in your imagination, and yet not reach the affections of your soul.

If you ask me then, what endeavors and what means every one must use, to obtain this true and necessary contrition? I answer, first, that more pains and greater endeavors are necessary for some persons than others. Such pious and devout souls, who truly love and fear God, who have a horror for all mortal sin, and therefore live without falling into any, as I do not question but a great many do; such devout servants of God, though they have daily failings and imperfections to beg pardon for; yet the chief affections of their souls being in the main fixed upon God, as they ought to be, they can without any great difficulty, by the grace of God, make true acts of sorrow, and detestation of sin, of the love of God, and the like; they are in the habit of grace, in the habit of charity, and so can more easily produce acts of virtue. Yet here I must put you in mind, that whensoever you come to the sacrament of penance, though you have not fallen into any great sin, though you have only lesser failings, and venial imperfections, to accuse yourselves of, you must of necessity have true contrition, a sincere sorrow for what you confess, and a firm purpose to avoid them; otherwise, you want one of the necessary and essential parts of the sacrament of penance, viz., contrition, without which it can be no sacrament at all.

But now, as for such sinners who are guilty of mortal sin, and

who have perhaps frequently relapsed into the same sin, who have continued in the habits of vice, of pride, ambition, revenge, of swearing, cursing, lying, detracting, drinking, cheating, impurity, and the like; from whose hearts God has been long banished by sin and vice, and the devil taken possession of their souls; such persons cannot imagine, that it is so easy a matter for them to enter into the dispositions of a true sorrow and contrition. It is not a short time spent after a cold and negligent manner, nor the reading of an act of contrition, nor a slight preparation that will do their work; they have, perhaps, for a long time been in quite contrary dispositions to those they must now have, if they pretend to make their peace with God. St. Augustin tells us, "That the justification and reconciliation of a sinner is a greater work than the creation of the whole world." And the council of Trent declares, that grace once lost after baptism, is not to be recovered without great labor, and many penitential tears. Such sinners, therefore, may assure themselves, that what they go about is a work of great difficulty, which requires a diligent preparation, and a serious application of their best and utmost endeavors.

But to come to the method and means, which every penitent may make use of, when he comes to the sacrament of penance. First, every one ought to beg of Almighty God, by fervent and devout prayer, that he would grant him a true contrition; because contrition is a gift of God, which we cannot have of ourselves; and as Almighty God, out of his infinite goodness, is pleased to give a good spirit to those who ask it, as our Saviour himself assures us, (Luke xi. 13.) so you must earnestly beg this spirit of sorrow and compunction of your heavenly Father. Secondly, you must endeavor to excite yourselves thereunto, by seriously considering the great mischiefs and dreadful miseries that sin will bring upon your heads, and the great injury it does to God; and that you are thereby fallen under his heavy displeasure, and liable to all those dreadful curses, which are pronounced against sin and sinners; and that nothing keeps you from eternal torments

but the mercy, patience, and long forbearance of God, which, if abused, may let you fall into that endless and insupportable misery of everlasting flames. Whosoever considers these things, cannot surely but be very sorry for his past sins and offences. But another and better motive for sorrow for your sins, is that which regards God; to be sorry that you have been so ungrateful, and injurious to his divine majesty, who is infinitely good in himself, and has been so to you, by laying all possible benefits and obligations upon you. For has not he created you to be happy with him? And when you had forfeited your happiness by Adam's sin, did not his infinite love and goodness send his only beloved Son, to become man, and die as a ransom for you? Besides these general benefits to all mankind, call to mind the particular benefits and favors he has been pleased to confer upon you from time to time, and above all, calling you to the true faith Ah, dear Christians! can you reflect on all this, and not be sorry and grieved to your very heart, that you should be so ungrateful and vile to him, who has been so good to you? These motives, if seriously considered, ought certainly to move you to a hearty sorrow and contrition for all your sins.

These, dear Christians, are the dispositions of a true and sincere penitent, and I hope they are yours, for they are absolutely necessary when you aim to make your peace with God in the sacrament of penance; and if you continue in these dispositions, they will unite your souls to God, by his grace in this world, and bring you to the recompense of endless glory in the next.

DISCOURSE III.

ON CONFESSION.

He that hideth his sins shall not prosper; but he that shall confess, and forsake them, shall obtain mercy.—Prov. xxviii. 13.

Of all the obstacles to the increase of the true religion, a wicked life was always the most pernicious; for whatever may be the pretence of those who forsake her communion, when their case is stated without partiality, it will appear, that the love of liberty, and indulging of corrupt nature, were the chief motives of their defection. For though some of the errors which they propagated were the effect of pride, and seemed to have no immediate relation to practice, yet the generality of their tenets were destructive to good morality; and even those that were merely speculative, originally laid the foundation of a wicked behavior. If they withdrew themselves from the authority of the church, it was a breach of obedience, and opened a gap for all sorts of disorders. If they denied the power of God's efficacious grace and free-will, and declared them to be inconsistent, what was the consequence, but to take away the necessity of prayer and other methods of salvation? If they exploded the merit of good works, it plainly discovered their indifferency as to the performing them. If they declaimed against fasting, and other corporal mortifications, and ridiculed the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, it is a plain indication they were disposed to indulge corrupt nature, and excesses of all kinds. But among all their pretended reformations, the most remarkable proof of a wicked disposition, was laying aside the practice of confession, which was the method established by our Saviour Christ, for the conversion of sinners.

In order, therefore, to inform you how to comply with it, as being the second part of penance, I will lay before you in this

discourse, first, the necessity and benefit of confession; and secondly, the preparations and method of it; and lastly, the conditions which must accompany it.

To be rightly informed of the necessity, and obligation there is of confessing your sins, according as it is practised in the Catholic church, you are to distinguish three sorts of confession. First—Confession to God alone. Secondly—Confession to a friend, by way of advising. And, thirdly—Confession to the ministers of God's church, according to the method prescribed by the gospel.

That there is an obligation of confessing your sins to Almighty God, is manifest from the nature of repentance; because true sorrow and forgiveness require acknowledgment. Confessing to a friend, by way of advice, though it falls under no precept, is a way of being relieved, and of avoiding evil, both spiritual and temporal. Upon this foundation our Saviour Christ was pleased to erect a spiritual tribunal, purposely for hearing the sinner's case, where, by confessing his faults, he might appease the injured majesty of God, and receive proper instructions to move him to sorrow, comfort him in his troubles, and secure him against future temptations. This practice of confession was appointed under a precept of the Jews, as we read in the fifth chapter of Numbers, v. 6, 7. It was also prefigured in the old law, especially in the ceremony performed when any one was infected with the distemper called the leprosy, which was a type of sin The persons so infected, were obliged to present themselves to the priests, who had authority to separate them from the rest of the people, and re-admit them as soon as they were cured. (Levit. xiii. 13. Matt. viii.) Now, dear Christians, this ceremony is constantly applied by the ancient fathers to what was practised amongst Christians, when they appeared in the church to do penance for their sins. A nearer figure of this practice is observed in St. John Baptist, who, preparing the way for our Redeemer, the people flocked to him confessing their sins, hereby

imitating the tribunal of confession, which was soon after to be established by Christ and his apostles. And, accordingly that custom is made mention of in the Acts of the Apostles: "And many of them that came confessing and declaring their sins." No doubt, these persons did not fail to confess their sins to God; but besides that general confession, the words of the scripture import a particular declaration of their offences to the apostles. And this not only by way of advice, but by way of precept, as it is distinctly signified in the words of St. James, (v. 16.) "Confess, therefore, your sins to one another;" that is, not every body to every one, but the flock to the priests of the church who have power and jurisdiction conferred upon them to loose or bind, according as they shall find persons disposed.

Now, that such a power is given to the ministers of the church, and that a confession of sin is implied in the execution of this power, is so plainly delivered in the holy scriptures, that the words cannot possibly be understood in any other sense. "He breathed upon them, and said to them, receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained." For how shall the ministers of the church know what is to be forgiven, and what retained, unless the sinner make the true state of their conscience known to them by confession? How shall they know what remedy is proper to be applied, unless they are first acquainted with the nature of the distemper: the case is parallel in temporal tribunals: a judge has no light how to pass sentence, either in civil or criminal causes, unless facts are made appear by proper evidence. The same method is required in the tribunal of confession; nor can the ministers of the church execute their power, unless the offender make a distinct declaration of his sins.

Besides, the sacrament of penance was also ordained by our Saviour Christ, as a certain cure (if you make right use of it) to heal the wounds of your souls, of which, consequently the priests are the spiritual physicians. How then can they know what

remedies to apply, or how can they give good and suitable advice, unless you give them a full account of your condition? Thus you see, whether you consider the ministers of God as the judge or as the physicians of your souls, you must, upon both accounts, make a sincere and exact confession of all your sins and offences.

From these proofs it may be inferred, that confession is not a human, but a divine institution: and indeed the nature of the thing declares it to be such, for the aversion persons naturally have to it is so great, that had it been invented or imposed only by men, the world would never have so universally submitted to the practice. These considerations have prevailed with many, who are otherwise our adversaries, to wish that the pretended first reformers had still kept up the discipline. But it was too great a restraint upon those who aimed chiefly at liberty and pleasure. Indeed they make a show of it in their common prayer book, where all that are troubled in mind are advised to confess their sins, and to apply themselves to the ministry for absolution. But it is an advice they scarce ever follow, though they cannot but be sensible of the many benefits they are deprived of by that neglect.

For as all divine precepts are founded in reason, and recommend themselves by their usefulness to the practice of virtue, and reclaiming sinners; so nothing can be alleged more in favor of confession, than to consider it, first, as a means of putting us in the grace and favor of God: for his goodness shines no where more bountifully than in the sacrament of reconciliation. What should we have done had we not been blessed by this expedient of mercy? I fear there are but few here present who can say, they have faithfully preserved their baptismal innocence: I fear you cannot say, you have never forfeited your right to the kingdom of heaven by mortal sin. You see, therefore, what a blessing confession is; why then do you slight it? Is it an unhappiness to be delivered from the precipice of a miserable damnation? Is it an unhappiness to be restored to the favor of an offended

Miserable! is it an unhappiness to be admitted into the fellowship of the saints in heaven? You have dealt unjustly with your God, and can it be too much to make him satisfaction by so small a humiliation? Besides, let not the devil tempt you to think it too much trouble, since you ought not to spare the most difficult labors to save your souls; let not the business of this world be your hindrance; the affairs of your souls are your main concern. Let not fear or shame seduce you: where is the shame in seeking a reconciliation with your offended God? If there be any shame it ought to be in sinning, and not in asking pardon. It is better to expose yourselves to one private person, tied by all laws, human and divine, to a perpetual secrecy, than be exposed one day before the whole world, to your eternal confusion.

Now, to consider, secondly, that confession is a means which contributes much to the practice of virtue, and reclaiming of sinners. The thing itself speaks as much, but experience is still a more convincing proof; by the great number of conversions which daily happen, and are entirely owing to that salutary practice. Those who have been involved in most enormous crimes, have found relief, and an end put to all their disorders, by a sincere confession of their sins. It has humbled the proud, turned the hearts of the envious, bridled ambition, extinguished lust and concupiscence, amended human frailties, removed theo ccasions of offending, and in a word produced all those good effects for which every Christian ought to labor. You need no other confirmation of those particulars, than to attend to the lives of so many saints, who have made confession the basis of their shining merits, and the first step towards their conversion. In this they followed the method which all wise and serious persons pursue. In things of the greatest moment, when they are involved in an intricate affair, they advise with a friend of probity and experience. In diseases you are willing to have the assistance of a skilful physician: in law-suits you apply yourselves to some eminent counsellor. And if this is a prudent and beneficial method

in temporal concerns, why should it not be equally serviceable in affairs of conscience, where the adviser can have no interest, nor lie under any temptation, to say or act anything, but what manifestly tends to the good of the person in distress?

It happens, dear Christians, in confession, as it does in all other duties, there is a beneficial way of complying with them, and a way of performing them without any profit. And particularly as to confession, certain rules and preparations are required to render it truly serviceable. Though you are fully convinced of the obligation, and sensible of the benefit and blessings that attend the performance, yet some other things are to be considered, to render the duty complete.

When you begin to prepare yourselves for confession, you ought first of all to beg light and grace of Almighty God, to know and remember your sins; for we are apt to judge partially of ourselves. Self-love, and our other passions many times blind us, and make us overlook several faults in ourselves, which, perhaps, we can easily enough see in other persons. But let me tell you, you can never escape the knowledge of God, who perfectly sees and comprehends every thought of your mind, and motion of your heart. This made St. Paul say, (1 Cor. iv. 4.) that though he was not conscious to himself of any guilt that lay upon his conscience, yet he durst not, for all that pronounce himself justified; because, (says he,) it is God that must judge me. Whensoever, therefore, you go about to prepare yourselves for confession, be sure never omit, by some short prayer at least to beg of Almighty God, that by the assistance of his holy grace, you may be able to discover your sins, and make a true and worthy confession.

After this, you must endeavor to find out your sins by a careful and diligent examen of your conscience. All that Almighty God requires of you in this point is, that you use the like care and diligence in this examen, as you would in any other matter of great concern and importance. Learn from the solicitude

men have about their temporal concerns, the care you ought to have of the affairs of your salvation. If a man, for example, was to be tried for his life, and knew not well what accusations would be laid to his charge, he would not fail to examine well in what he had transgressed the laws, and made himself liable to punishment; and if after this, a hearty sorrow, a sincere acknowledgment of his faults, would acquit him, he would not omit to make a diligent examination of his life, and an exact confession of the transgressions he had committed.

There are two examens which may serve to prepare you for a good confession. The first is, a daily examen, which every one who is careful of his salvation, ought to make every night of the actions and failings of that day; this examen is of very great advantage, and whosoever neglects it, I fear he is but in a dangerous way as to his salvation. You must be sure to join to this examen a hearty act of contrition; that is, a sincere sorrow and firm purpose of avoiding those sins in which you find yourselves involved. This daily examen, if you make it well, will bring you to a true knowledge of yourselves; nothing can contribute more to a reformation of your lives, and to make you remember the sins you have to confess, when you come to the sacrament of penance. Whereas if a person frequently omits his daily examen, if he leads a careless, and perhaps a sinful life, especially if he be engaged in the custom and habit of sin, and yet neglect to call himself often to account, he is in a very great danger of forgetting what he ought to remember, and by this means, of making an imperfect and defective confession. It is true, Almighty God requires no more, than that you accuse yourselves of all the sins, which after a careful and diligent examen, you are able to remember; and what you cannot call to mind, in case you are otherwise rightly disposed, are certainly forgiven in the same manner as if they were confessed; but it is a different case when this forgetfulness is occasioned by your past neglect; when the reason sins, the number and cir-

cumstances of them is, because you would not take care to remember them.

To repair this fault, and supply as much as possible the omission of a daily examen, such persons must take a longer time, and more pains in that second and general examen, which every one is obliged to make when he comes to the sacrament of penance. Doubtless such careless sinners as come seldom to confession, who have fallen into a multitude of sins, and perhaps grievous ones too, must not content themselves with a short, negligent, and superficial examen, before they come to confession, a longer and a more diligent preparation, both as to their examen and contrition, is absolutely necessary for them, not to make themselves guilty of a sacrilege, instead of receiving any benefit by the sacrament.

And now, as to the manner of this general examen, give me leave, for the instruction of every one, especially those who cannot read, and consequently are not acquainted with the table of sins, and those helps which prayer books may afford, to enumerate those sins which are forbidden by the law of God. You must know that every sin is a breach of some commandment or precept of God or his church: and together with the commandments, you must likewise include what we call the seven deadly sins.

By the first commandment you are bound to honor and adore Almighty God; to believe in him, hope in him, and love him. Be sure, therefore, examine yourselves, and see whether your affections have been chiefly placed on God, or rather upon yourselves and upon creatures? Whether you have been careful in your daily prayers and devotions, or perhaps many times missed, and it may be, some days said very few, or no prayers at all? Whether you have firmly believed all matters of faith, as God has revealed, and his church proposes them, or whether you have perhaps doubted of anything which your holy faith teaches you? Whether you have spoken irreverently of God and his saints, or

of religion, and what belongs to the service of God? Whether you have given way to any thoughts of despair, or what is more common, presumed on the goodness of God, and out of a presumption, given way to your passions, and deferred your repentance? Whether you have made use of any superstition, believed dreams, consulted and given credit to fortune-tellers, or the like?

The second commandment forbids to take the name of God in vain. You must then examine yourselves, whether you do not name the sacred name of God irreverently, and on slight occasions? Whether you have not sworn rashly by his holy name, by your faith, conscience, or soul, or used any other oaths? Whether what you swore to in this manner was not false, which makes it still a much greater sin; or whether you swore to do what you did not then intend to do, or what you ought not to do? Whether you have not cursed your neighbor, or at least the creatures of God, as your cattle and the like, either rashly, or in anger, or passion? Whether you have not provoked others to anger, so as to make them swear or curse? Whether you have not broke some vow or promise which you had made to Almighty God?

By the third commandment you are bound to keep holy the Sunday, and other days commanded by the church. You must then examine yourselves how you have spent those days? Whether you have abstained from all servile work, which was not of absolute necessity? Whether you have spent a good part of those days in your devotions, and in the service of God, or perhaps the greatest part of them in idleness, drinking, gaming, and the like? Whether you have neglected to hear mass on those days when you could do it, or at least have not come too late, and so not satisfy the obligations of the day?

As to the fourth commandment, which is, "Honor thy father and thy mother;" parents are here to examine themselves, whether they have taken care of their children and their education, and particularly to see that they are instructed in the Christian doc-

trine? Whether they have not given them bad example by their swearing and cursing, by immodest discourse, by their excess in drinking? The like may be said of masters and mistresses in regard of their servants. Children are to examine themselves, whether they have not been undutiful and disobedient to their parents, and other lawful superiors? Whether they have not spoken contemptibly of them, or to them, scorned their advice, taken pleasure to vex them, and the like? Servants must here examine themselves how they have behaved towards their masters.

By the fifth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," is not only forbidden murder, but also quarrelling and disagreeing with your neighbors; as also anger and passion, all hatred and ill-will against one another, all resenting and not forgiving injuries.

As to the sixth and ninth commandments, every one must examine himself, whether he has not been guilty of sins of unchastity, either in thought, word or action? Whether he has not given ear willingly to immodest discourse, or songs? Whether he has not, some way or other, been the cause of another's sinning in some kind or other, against chastity and modesty?

The seventh and tenth commandments forbid every one to wrong any person, either by action or desire. You must examine yourselves, whether you have not injured or cheated others either by bargain or gaming, by not paying just debts, or by running into debts which are not likely to be paid? Whether you have made full restitution for the damages and injuries which you have done to your neighbor? Whether you have been so charitable to the poor, and those in necessity, as you might and ought to have been?

As to the eighth commandment, which forbids all false witness against our neighbor, every one must examine himself, whether he has not been guilty of detracting and speaking ill of others? Whether he has spread false and doubtful reports to their prejudice? Whether he has judged hly of them in any kind?

Whether he has not been willing to hear others detract and speak ill of them? Whether, in fine, he has not offended Almighty God, by any lies or untruths?

Every one must likewise examine himself, whether he has not given way to pride or vanity, by thinking too well of himself, and preferring himself before others; by seeking to be esteemed, and by dispraising others? Whether he has not envied and grieved at the prosperity and good fortune of others; perhaps rejoiced at their losses and ill fortune? Whether he has not offended God by sins of intemperance, by excess in drinking, and the like? Whether he has kept and observed the fasts commanded by the church, and the days of abstinence in such a manner as he ought? Whether, in fine, he has not been slothful and negligent in the service of God, in frequenting the sacraments, and in the exercises of other good works, according to the opportunity he had? These, dear Christians, are the chief points in which sinners must examine themselves, in order to make a good confession.

Let us now consider the conditions which must accompany confession, and in what manner you must accuse and declare your sins.

After a diligent examination of your conscience, and a hearty sorrow and firm purpose of amendment, you must accuse yourselves to your spiritual father, and confess all the sins you remember. Here you must observe that your confession must be accompanied with this condition, viz., it must be entire. The want of this condition makes the sacrament null, and the confession sacrilegious. Besides this condition (in order to make your confession perfect) there are five others, viz., it should be with sorrow, clear, short, frequent, and humble.

First, then, your confession must be entire; that is, of all the sins you remember, after a diligent and sufficient examen. But here you must make a distinction between the confession of venial and mortal sins; the confession of one being of precept, the

other only recommended as good and profitable to such as have a desire to amend their lesser failings and imperfections, and make advancement in the way of virtue. It is, therefore, in regard of the confession of mortal sins, that this integrity is required; so that in order that your confession may be entire, you must take great care not to omit any considerable sin, which you have had the misfortune to fall into since the last time you confessed. And you must take notice that every one is strictly and indispensably obliged, not only to confess the different kinds of sins which he has committed, but also the number of all his deadly and grievous sins, as well as he can remember, whether in deeds, in words, in thoughts and desires; so that it will not suffice to accuse yourselves, as a great many do, by saying, I have cursed, I have sworn, I have neglected my prayers, I have neglected hearing mass, I have stolen, I have had immodest thoughts, I have lied, I have detracted others, and the like; such an accusation as this will not do; for you cannot but see that there is a great deal of difference between committing a sin only once, and doing it ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or a hundred times, and every time it is repeated it is a new sin. But this you will say, seems a very difficult task to some, and looks like an impossibility to others; but let me tell you, you are very much deceived, for you are only obliged to give the number as near as you can tell; and if it be in regard of sins of habit, into which you have so frequently fallen, that you cannot give any set number, you need only tell the length of time you have been engaged in such habits, and how often, probably speaking, you might have fallen into such sins in a day or a week, and so on. So that you see, it will not suffice for a person to accuse himself, and say, I have been drunk, &c., all this signifies nothing; so that you must tell the number, that is, how often you have committed such and such sins.

Again; you must not only confess the number of your sins, but you must also declare the circumstances, which either change

the nature of the sin, or considerably increase the guilt. Thus, for example, it is not enough for a person to accuse himself, by saying, I have stolen or taken what was not my own, but he must also express the value of what he took; and if he took it out of a church, or some other holy place, that circumstance, which makes it a sacrilege, must be expressed in confession. This condition of making an entire confession is absolutely necessary, as I said before; for if any person wilfully leaves out any one mortal sin, either out of fear or shame, or upon any account whatsoever, the confession which he makes is void, and of no value, because none of his sins can be forgiven, unless they are all forgiven; and, therefore, he returns more guilty from confession than before.

Secondly. Your confession must be with sorrow; that is, with a sentiment of grief and regret for the sins you accuse yourselves of, resolving never more to fall into the like faults.

Thirdly. Your confession ought to be clear; that is, in terms as easy and intelligible as possibly you can, since you ought to have a sincere will to make yourselves understood by your confessor; and therefore no words or expressions must be made use of, which may cloak or disguise your sins; for if you should do this with a design that your confessor should not understand the state of your conscience, it would be the same as if you had concealed your sins.

Fourthly. Your confession ought to be short; that is not to say any more than what is necessary to make yourselves rightly understood, and to avoid repeating the same thing, or running into needless circumstances, which are but too frequent among penitents. You must therefore simply tell your sins in this manner, viz., I accuse myself, that since my last confession I have committed such a sin so often; so adding only what is necessary to make your confessor understand the quality of your sins, or answering directly to the questions he shall ask, to inform himself the better

Fifthly. Your confession ought to be frequent; for though it is true there is a precept of the church which obliges every one to confess once a year; yet this precept is rather to declare, that a person deserves not the name of a Catholic, but rather to be excommunicated, and separated from the communion of the faithful, who does not at least confess and communicate once a year: you are not therefore to imagine, that a person complies with this obligation to Almighty God, who comes so seldom to the sacraments. If you sin often, you ought to confess often, and whosoever has a true care of the great concern of his eternal salvation, comes to the sacraments, and makes his accounts straight with Almighty God at least once a month, or thereabouts.

Lastly. Your confession ought to be accompanied with humility: "Almighty God, (says St. James,) resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble." If all your actions ought to be done with the spirit of humility, how much more this of penance and confession, when you come to present yourselves as criminals before Almighty God, to accuse yourselves, and beg pardon for your offences? Your confession must be humble, like that of the publican, who thought himself not worthy to lift up his eyes to heaven, but with an humble and contrite heart cried out, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner.* You must therefore enter into the like dispositions of humility, whensoever you confess your sins and hope to obtain pardon.

Thus, dear Christians, I have shewed you the necessity and benefit of confessing your sins, in order to obtain pardon; I have likewise shewed you with what care you ought to examine and prepare yourselves; and I have proposed to you the conditions which must and ought to accompany every confession.

In the mean time I have said nothing of a general confession, because it is not necessary for every one; I mean for those who have been careful and exact in every particular confession. It is notwithstanding very necessary for all those who have any reasonable doubt of a want of a true and hearty contrition, or to supply

the defect of a sufficient examen. For if any one has had the misfortune to leave out any considerable sin, at any time, when he came to the sacrament of penance; if, after great sins, he has been very negligent in examining and preparing himself, when he came to confession; if, in fine, his confessions have been generally without any amendment or change of life, it is then absolutely necessary for all such persons to use the best preparation they can, and by a general confession to endeavor to make their peace with God; such a peace, such a reconciliation, such a conversion, as may secure their salvation for eternity in the kingdom of heaven.

DISCOURSE IV.

ON A SACRILEGIOUS CONFESSION.

For thy soul be not ashamed to say the truth; for there is a shame that bringeth sin, and there is a shame that bringeth glory and grace.—Eccl. iv. 24, 25.

The confusion, dear Christians, that causeth death, is that which hinders the sinner from laying open the true state of his conscience; without which his soul can never be restored to the life of grace. But the confusion, which has grace in this life, and eternal glory in the next for its reward, is that which a penitent submits to, in becoming his own accuser. Whence it appears, that to conceal willingly in confession any mortal sin, or what you judge or believe to be a great sin, is not only the addition of a most grievous fault, but is also the greatest folly and madness; as I shall endeavor to shew you in this discourse, by explaining to you the nature of this sin.

To conceal a sin in confession, is a crime of that nature, that we cannot doubt but the devil himself is the great promoter of it; he has a double aim in tempting men to it; first, to gratify his own pride and malice, to which nothing is more insupportable than the humble confession of repenting sinners: secondly

to perpetuate the slavery of those whom he has already in his power; well knowing that if he can but get them into his snare, he is secure of them. You may therefore be well assured, that whenever the shame of confessing any sin begins to gain ground so far upon you, as to put you upon deliberating, whether you shall or shall not do your duty, it is the devil suggests these dangerous thoughts; it is the mortal enemy of your souls endeavors to tie up your tongues, that the gate of mercy be for ever shut against you; it is the father of lies makes you ashamed of what alone can procure a solid glory. "The devil, (says St. Chrysostom, Hom. de Confess.) inverts the order established by God; which is, that we should be ashamed to sin, and glory in confessing our sin. The devil inverts this order, and gives us a confidence to sin, and a shame to confess." Whilst he attempts men to sin, it is his business to make them throw off all shame; this being one of the greatest restraints Almighty God has laid upon human nature. But when the sin is accomplished, and the party concerned begins to look back, with a heavy heart, upon the offence he has committed, then the devil returns upon him with new snares, and instead of robbing him of shame, as before, he heightens it as much as he can; instead of hiding from him the deformity of his sin, he sets it in the broadest light before him, and represents it under the most frightful aggravations; not to raise in his heart a penitential abhorrence of it, but to overwhelm him with such an excessive confusion for what he has done, that the difficulty of confessing becoming insupportable, it may engage him in a desperate resolution, of either utterly abandoning the sacrament of penance, the only sanctuary left to secure his return to God; or what is worse, to play the hypocrite, and impose upon his confessor.

This is the devil's ordinary stratagem, which has ever brought him in such a plentiful harvest of souls, that it is no wonder he should continue to practice the same cheat upon us. But the great wonder is, that Christians who have the light both of faith

and reason to guide them, should be so easily drawn into the snare, and induced to commit a sin attended with so many aggravations; that we may properly call it a complication of many crimes, wrapt up in one single act.

For, first, the party concerned is guilty of sacrilege, and that of the first magnitude; since it is the abuse of a sacrament instituted by Christ, to restore grace to the soul, and in particular, to reconcile us to Almighty God. Now, in making a false confession, you provoke God by those very means he has appointed to appease him: you make him your enemy, at the same time you go to make your peace with him; and you change the sacrament, which is a sentence of absolution, into a sentence of condemnation. But what is still more, this sacrilege is the forerunner of another of a much blacker dye, viz., a sacrilegious communion, which generally follows of course.

Secondly—He is guilty of hypocrisy, in making use of a solemn act of religion to cover a sin, in masking a diabolical pride with a counterfeit humility; in affecting to be most religiously devout, when he is most sacrilegiously wicked; and finally, in pretending a repentance for his sins past, when he is both actually increasing his former guilt, and designing soon after to add to it another most grievous sin.

Thirdly—He is guilty of ingratitude, in despising the greatest pledges of God's goodness towards him, and frustrating, as far as in him lies, the designs of his mercy; nay, using his blessings as arms to fight against him. However, these are but the inseparable circumstances of this sin; but its proper malice consists in being a wilful and premeditated lying to the Holy Ghost. For the better understanding whereof, it is to be observed, that when a priest officiates in the sacred tribunal of penance, he acts there as God's representative, and public minister of Jesus Christ: now, whatever affront is offered to a public minister, especially when he acts as such, reflects upon him whose minister he is. So that the behavior of a person, presenting himself be-

fore the minister of Christ, is to be considered no otherwise than as if Christ himself were visibly present to him: and by consequence, all dissimulation and double-dealing, used with a confessor during the actual administration of his sacred function, is endeavoring to impose upon God himself; and lying to the one, is the same as lying to the other.

Now to proceed in shewing the nature of this sin; let us first consider how hateful all sorts of lying is to God. There are six things (says Solomon, Prov. vi. 16.) which God hates; and the second of these is a lying tongue. Again, in his twelfth chapter, (v. 22.) he tells us, that "lying lips are an abomination to the Lord;" and the reason is, because lying is directly opposite to one of God's attributes, viz., *Truth;* and since he cannot but love his own divine perfections, it follows, that he cannot but hate whatever is directly opposite to any of them.

But to be more convinced of the hatred God bears to lying, you need but consider how odious a quality it is counted even amongst men, whose reasons though much obscured by original and actual sins, yet amidst this darkness every one has light enough to discern, in some measure, the beauty and loveliness of truth, and that all men in the world naturally hate a lying tongue; for proof whereof, I need but offer this familiar instance, that no man, tender of his credit, can bear the imputation of it; and that one of the greatest affronts that can be put upon a man of honor, is to give him the lie.

Hence, it appears, that lying is not only universally detested, but that the opinion men have of its deformity proceeds from an inbred principle of nature, and is so deeply rooted, that nothing can efface it: and what wonder then is it, that lying lips, (as Solomon tells us,) should be an abomination to God? For if men, corrupted as they are with sin, and blinded with passion, are so enamored with the admirable beauty of truth, that they cannot but regard a lying tongue as a thing worthy of hatred and aversion; how much more odious and hateful then must this

vice be to the pure eye of God, who fully comprehending the infinite excellence of his own divine perfections, whereof truth is one, has also a clear and comprehensive knowledge of the deformity of falsehood, lying, and dissimulation, which are the vices opposite to this charming virtue? He must certainly hate the one, as much as he loves the other.

However, there are several degrees in the sin of lying, some of which are of a worse complexion than others; as for instance, to be casually surprised into a trivial or officious lie, is by all judged but a venial sin; but to make a practice, even of such lies, or to stand out stiffly in a deliberate and studied lie, (though it be no prejudice to any one,) cannot but be very displeasing to God, because it betrays a strong affection to it; and a wilful affection to any sin whatever, is a very bad and dangerous disposition.

Now I leave you to judge, what sort of sin it must be to lie to a confessor. For if all sorts of lying, but especially premeditated and studied lying, be very hateful to God; if to dissemble and play the hypocrite with a parent or superior, or any other person, to whom we owe and profess nothing but sincerity and candor, be yet a fouler sort of lying, than when it is only practised towards an indifferent person; how hateful a thing must it be, to come with a premeditated and deliberate lie to a minister of Christ! who, besides being a spiritual father, and one to whom we make profession of the greatest confidence, in seeming to trust him with the very secrets of our hearts, is, over and above, by virtue of his function, the representative of Jesus Christ; how detestable, I say, is it to juggle and dissemble with a person of this character! since lying to such a one, is not lying to man, but to God himself, as I have already told you.

And can you think of such a sin without horror? is it not a crime that justly deserves to be detested with the greatest hatred and aversion? If Christ should manifest himself visibly to you, durst you have the boldness to dissemble with him, or attempt

to pass a lie upon him? And is it not the same affront, whether he be present to you in person, or in the person of his minister? For to lie to God's minister, is to lie to God himself: as it is declared by St. John, upon a certain occasion; wherein God thought fit to manifest his hatred to this sin, by so severe and exemplary a judgment, as struck the whole church with terror and amazement.

I suppose you all guess I mean the dreadful end of Ananias and Saphira, who, having sold an estate, pretended, as other Christians had done, to bring the whole price of it to St. Peter; whereas in effect, they had kept back some part of it for their own private use. But St. Peter knowing, by divine revelation, the cheat they came to put upon him, was deeply wounded at heart, and being moved with a just indignation, spoke thus to Ananias: "Why hath satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost? thou hast not lied to man, but unto God." (Acts v. 3, 4.) Whereupon the unfortunate wretch, as one thunderstruck, fell down dead at St. Peter's feet; and a few moments after, his wife, who had been an accomplice with him in his crime, received the same reward of her hypocrisy.

This, dear Christians, is the account given us by St. Luke, of the exemplary judgment that befel this unhappy couple. And it is to be particularly observed, that St. Peter styles their sin, a lying to the Holy Ghost: for though he knew the cheat was immediately intended, and practised upon himself, yet, in as much as he was Christ's minister, he considered the injury as done to God himself, and the punishment was proportioned accordingly. However you may observe, that in the case of these two persons so severely punished, there were neither sacrilege, nor injustice, but the whole charge against them was lying and hypocrisy. Whereas, in the case of a false confession, besides foul dealing, dissimulation, hypocrisy, and lying to the Holy Ghost, there is, over and above, a sacrament profaned, God's blessings abused, his mercies trampled upon, and the most effectual means of

amendment turned into an occasion of greater sins. So that it plainly appears, that the crime of a counterfeit penitent is far more grievous in itself, and by consequence, more detestable in the sight of God, than the sin of Ananias and Saphira.

But will he then let the wicked sinner, who is guilty of false confessions, go unpunished? No, dear Christians, no: for though the criminal suffers no present punishment in the body, yet his soul falls under the malediction of God, in the very instant he commits the fact. So that whilst his deluded confessor, acting to the best of his knowledge, is busy in pronouncing his absolution; Almighty God, who cannot be imposed upon, looks down upon him with indignation, and instead of cancelling the hand-writing that was against him, dooms his soul to an increase of torments, answerable to the increase of guilt.

It is true, the time of life being a time of mercy, the sentence pronounced against him may be reversed, provided he renders himself worthy of it by a hearty sorrow, and sincere confession. And then he ought daily to acknowledge God's infinite goodness, in giving him time and grace to repent, which he has refused to those who were guilty of less grievous sins. This very consideration alone will furnish you with motives enough to raise in your souls the greatest detestation and abhorrence of this sin of a false confession.

However, I will now proceed to shew you, that the concealment of any sin in confession, is not only the addition of a most grievous sin, as I have already proved, but is over and above the very highest strain of folly and madness.

If, by imposing upon your confessor, you could at the same time deceive Almighty God; if, by concealing your sins from the knowledge of man, you could also hide them from the all-seeing eyes of Jesus Christ; finally, if your avoiding a momentary confusion in this life were a means to shelter you against eternal confusion hereafter, then indeed you would not altogether want encouragement to play the hypocrite, and deal unfairly with

God's minister: and though in so doing you might be taxed with irreligion and sacrilege, you could not, however, be accused of weakness and folly.

But, alas! the case is quite otherwise; the ulcers of your soul, though ever so industriously concealed from the eyes of men, lie always open to the eyes of God: that very sin, which you seek to hide from your confessor, is already registered in the great book of accounts; and nothing but an humble confession of it can hinder it from appearing against you to your everlasting confusion, both as to the hour of death, and the great day of judgment; and is it not then an unaccountable folly, to refuse a compliance with a duty, when there is no prospect of advantage to encourage you to transgress against it, and your submitting to it is the only means to rescue you from everlasting evils.

Suppose a criminal, condemned to die, should have his pardon offered him by the king, on condition that he would discover his crime, in secret, to a judge appointed by him; would not he be thought to have lost his reason, if he should refuse to submit to such easy terms? All men would certainly pronounce him guilty of excessive madness and cruelty to himself: yet this is the case of those who conceal any thing in confession; for Almighty God imposes no harder condition on sinners, and engages his word to deliver those who submit sincerely to it from eternal death, and the endless miseries their sins have deserved. What madness then, and infatuation is it, to reject so great a mercy, and purchase their pardon at so cheap a rate!

You will tell me, perhaps, the conditions required, are not so easy as is pretended; since to declare one's secret sins, is a thing to which man's nature has the greatest repugnance. But now, to silence these reasonings of human pride, only suppose, that the ordinary punishment of every sin you commit, were to have it exposed, as long as you live, to the view of every one you converse with; and then I ask you in this case, whether a sinner

would not be very mercifully dealt with, if to deliver himself from this public and lasting confusion, he were only obliged to confess his sins, in private, to a single person? And whether his refusing to accept the condition, would not draw on him the imputation of folly and madness? The case, dear Christians, admits of no dispute; since common prudence directs every one to choose the lesser of two evils.

This then being supposed, will answer all difficulties pretended on the score of natural repugnance in confessing your sins; for let there be the greatest repugnance in nature to it, if submitting be the only means a sinner has left him, to prevent evils infinitely greater than what he pretends to avoid, his refusing to comply with the condition, cannot be excused from the most extravagant weakness and folly. It remains only to shew, that the shame and confusion which will fall upon an impenitent sinner in the life to come, will not only be infinitely greater than what he apprehends in confessing his sins, but will, in every respect, exceed any confusion possible in this world.

To make this clear, you need only compare the one with the other. And first, as to their duration, it is plain, that the longest confusion you can suffer in this life, cannot last longer than life itself; death will infallibly put a period to it; but the confusion in the life to come will last for ever.

Alas! you are here afraid of a little confusion before a single man, and you reflect not that you must be exposed before a numberless multitude of men and angels, before whom all the sins of your whole life will be laid open, which will throw so heavy a load of shame upon you, that you will even wish to sink into the ground, and hide yourselves in the darkest dungeons of hell, to avoid being seen; but your shame will pursue you even thither, and be as everlasting as those flames that will never be quenched. Whence I leave you to judge whether Almighty God deals not very mercifully with you, in putting it into your power to change this terrible and everlasting confusion, due to your sins, for a

momentary humiliation before one single person, who, as you all know, is under the strictest obligation of secrecy, that human and divine laws can lay upon them; and whether your refusing to submit to such easy terms of reconciliation, be not a weakness and folly, rather to be expected from a man out of his senses, than one that pretends to judgment and reason.

However, to convince you still more fully of this truth, I shall make it appear, that confessing your sins is recommendable, even for the present ease it gives, and that the confusion that usually attends it, has no real foundation, but is grounded upon mistake and a deluded imagination. Now, as to the first, I have experience clearly on my side: for every one, who is not wholly given up to a reprobate sense, must own, from his own experience, that sin, lying upon a conscience, is a thorn that never ceases to gall and fret till it be plucked up: it is like an imposthume in the body; and as it is impossible for the body to be at ease till the imposthume be opened, and the corrupt matter let out; so it is no less impossible for a sinner's conscience to be at ease, till it be fully laid open by a sincere confession. So that, let a sinner flatter himself as he pleases, experience will convince him, that nothing but plain-dealing, and frankly declaring his sins without artifice or disguise, will ever procure him that which is the greatest blessing of life, viz., a true and solid peace of mind.

And as to the other part, viz., that the confusion a penitent suffers in confessing his sins is all grounded upon mistake, I need but shew, that the fear he has to lose his confessor's esteem by it, is only vain and imaginary: for it would be very strange if that, which is the only means to restore a sinner to God's favor and esteem, should lessen him in the opinion of God's minister. But let me tell you the thing is quite otherwise; because whatever guilt a person is charged with, an humble and sincere confession makes atonement for it; and is so far from discrediting the penitent, that nothing recommends him more effectually to the esteem, and even tender affections of his ghostly father; for it is then he

regards the penitent as a true copy of the prodigal son returning to his father. Besides, every one ought to do that justice to his confessor as to believe he understands his duty better than to entertain sentiments directly opposite to those of Almighty God; for God regards a sinner when he returns to him by true repentance, with the same love, as if he had never been guilty of any sin.

It is true, a confessor cannot have an infallible assurance of the repentance of the party who represents himself before him: however he is always bound to suppose it, as long as nothing appears to ground a contrary judgment: and every one may be assured, that one of the best marks he can have of the good disposition of a penitent is, to find him frank and sincere in opening his conscience to him: whereas if he has reason to suspect him guilty of double-dealing, he cannot but entertain a very uncomfortable opinion of him.

But here give me leave to ask a person concerned in this crime, what it is he proposes to himself? Does he ever intend to confess the sin he has concealed, or not? If not, then he renounces all hopes of salvation, and resolves directly to damn himself: and what a desperate resolution is this, in one who believes there are eternal flames prepared for those who die in mortal sin! But if he resolves to confess it sometime or other, why not sooner as well as later? Nay, why not at first, as well as afterwards? For the longer he runs on in this course, the harder it will be for him to get out of it, because all his confessions, since his first abuse of the sacrament, being void and null, must be looked back into and repeated.

And is not the tearing open so many old sores, and the unraveling a conscience perplexed with multiplicity of sins, a task that will put him to a much greater shame and confusion, than what he pretended to decline at first? Is it not much easier, think you, to confess a single sin, though ever so grievous in itself, than when it comes attended with a long train of other sins, besides

the grievous aggravation of sacrilege? This, therefore, being the unavoidable consequence of sacrilegious confessions, in relation to one who is no resolutely bent upon damning himself, it is evident, that all delays and put offs in this matter, cannot but increase the very difficulty upon which they are grounded, and serve to no other purpose than to cut out work for a more melancholy repentance, and a more mortifying shame.

But some, perhaps, will tell me, they depend upon an easier expedient, viz., of making one confession for all, upon their death-bed: for then, say they, we care not what our confessor thinks of us. But suppose this fine project should miscarry; suppose they should die suddenly, or be out of their senses in their last sickness, what then becomes of them? Are they not lost without remedy? However, allowing them the fairest chance, it is too much to be feared, that they who confess not till they just feel themselves dropping into destruction, are so disposed at heart, that they would not even confess then, had they any prospect of a longer life: and they must give me leave to tell them, that a confession made with this disposition, is but a very unsafe bottom to hazard their salvation upon.

I say not this to encourage despondency in any one, who should prove so unhappy as to have put things upon the last hazard; because, whatever his case may be, endeavoring to repent and make his peace with God, is certainly the best thing he can do, at any time whatever, and the last moments of his life cannot be better employed, than in a work so necessary as that of confessing and repenting. However, I think myself bound to deter all here present, from hazarding their salvation upon so great an uncertainty, as letting things come to that pass, that a death-bed repentance is all they have to depend on.

To conclude: if any here present be in that miserable state, I conjure you to look, and enter into yourselves that you may discover the dangerous condition to which your salvation is exposed; to open your eyes, and awake from that lethargy. Con-

sider, it is the devil that deceives you, and raises in you that wicked shame, or that foolish fear, by which he would work your eternal damnation, as he has done to many others of your age and condition. In a word, dear Christians, Almighty God is not to be mocked; and those who designedly put off the confessing their sins, till they come to die, will, I fear, find by woful experience, that they have only played the devil's game for him, and been industrious in laying snares to their own soults. What, therefore, I recommend to you is, to beseech Almighty God to preserve you from this fatal blindness; and to infuse into your souls the spirit of truth, that you may ever abominate all insincerity or double dealing; so that you may return from the sacrament of penace with a clear conscience of having related all your sins, and circumstances of them, which is the greatest comfort of this life, and will be a powerful means of bringing you to eterna. happiness in the next.

DISCOURSE V.

ON SATISFACTION.

Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of penance.—Luke iii. 8.

I HAVE informed you, dear Christians, before, that penance consists of three parts, viz., *Contrition*, *Confession*, and *Satisfaction;* of the two former I have already treated; it remains, therefore, that I now say something of *Satisfaction*, which is the third and last part of the sacrament of penance, and which consists in doing, or suffering something, to repair in some manner the injury we do to God by our sins. I say, to repair in some manner; because the great reparation for sin was performed by our Saviour Christ, who by his precious blood and death, has superabundantly repaired the injury which sin did to Almighty

God, and merited a general pardon of all the punishments the divine justice could require. This reparation and satifaction of Jesus Christ, (without which you would always have remained incapable of making the least satisfaction to God, and by consequence of ever returning again unto his grace and favor,) has opened and facilitated a way to a reconciliation with God after sin.

Now as it is in his power, who receives a person again into his favor, by whom he has been offended, to admit him on such conditions as he shall think fit, and either to remit him all the punishment, or to oblige him to undergo only part of it; it has pleased the divine wisdom, in respect of us, to make use of both one and the other of these two ways of reconciliation, though more ordinarily of the second. For in baptism he receives you into his grace, and remits you all the punishment due to your sins; but in penance he remits you only the eternal punishment; so still preserves some temporal pains to be suffered by the penitent, to the end that the penitent may satisfy, on his part, according to his power. In undergoing of this temporal punishment, consists the satisfaction of which I now speak, and which is the third part of penance.

And this satisfaction for our sins, at least in will and desire, is as much required of the penitent sinner, as contrition and confession; yet this part of penance is, commonly speaking, of all others the most neglected, as if it were enough, even for great sinners, to repent and accuse themselves of their offences, and to receive absolution. They are very apt to forget the punishment due to sin, and their obligation to repair the injury done to Almighty God, and to endeavor to satisfy the divine justice, by such works of penance, as may have some proportion to their offences. It is this great neglect, especially in these latter ages, which many times makes penance defective, and is frequently the occasion why persons relapse into the same sins, and make little or no advantage by the sacrament of penance.

I shall, therefore, in this discourse, first, propose to you the necessity of satisfaction: and secondly, the manner and different ways by which you must endeavor to satisfy the divine justice, in punishment of the sins you have committed.

Nothing is more certain than that every offence deserves punishment; and the greater the offence, the punishment likewise, (according to the rules of justice,) ought to be so much greater: for, as St. Cyprian says, the more we have offended, the more we ought to weep; let the penance, says he, be no less than the crime; and the greater the crime, the greater the satisfaction. You ought to remember, that every sin is an offence against the infinite majesty of God, and every deadly or mortal sin makes him who commits it liable to eternal punishments in the flames of hell.

It is true, such is the mercy and goodness of God, that whensoever any one is truly penitent, and with right dispositions makes use of the sacrament of penance, he is pleased to remit and forgive both the guilt and eternal punishment which we have incurred by our sins; yet, generally speaking, a temporal punishment still remains due to our offences, as we find from the practice of the Old Testament: nay, even from the beginning of the world. When Almighty God pardoned Adam his sin, he condemned him to labor during his whole life, in punishment thereof: when he pardoned David his sins of adultery and murder, he told him by his prophet, that he should be chastised by the death of his child; and he remitted him nothing of all the menaces with which he threatened him by the same prophet, that he himself should see the dishonor of his house, dissension among his children, and other misfortunes which were foretold him, and all which came to pass. There are a vast number of the like examples in the holy scriptures, which shew evidently that God doth not pardon sins, but with an obligation of doing penance. Now it is to clear this debt, it is to expiate this temporal punishment due to our sins, that satisfaction is necessary for every penitent sinner.

You may distinguish two kinds of satisfaction: the first is what is called a sacramental satisfaction; by which is understood that satisfaction, those prayers or works of penance, which are enjoined by the priest when you come to the sacrament of penance; this is necessary for the validity of the sacrament, at least as to the will and intent of satisfying. So that penitents are to remember, that they lie under a strict obligation of actually performing the penances enjoined them, as well those that are prescribed by way of remedies and preservatives against future relapses, as those that are enjoined in punishment of their past offences. They must likewise be careful to perform their penance in the spirit of devotion, and with the dispositions of a penitential heart, and not an unthinking, tepid, negligent manner, as too often it happens, whereby they lose the greatest part of the benefit and merit they might otherwise have. The second is a voluntary satisfaction; by which every one, who has a true sense of his duty to God, and of the grievousness and multitude of his past offences, endeavors voluntarily to punish himself for the sins he has committed.

But perhaps some one will say, that the sacrament of penance blotteth out all sins; what necessity then is there to use voluntary punishments, whereby we may satisfy the divine justice for sins remitted? To which I answer, that although the sacrament of penance cancelleth and blotteth out all sins, yet it doth not blot out all the pain or temporal punishment, as I said before; and this evidently appears from the scriptures, and may be abundantly shewed, that Almighty God sometimes remitteth to a penitent sinner his faults, but chastiseth him with temporal afflictions, to the end that sin may not remain altogether unpunished.

Now the end of both these satisfactions is to repair, as much as you are able, the injuries done to Almighty God by your sins. Satisfaction is an act of justice, which, therefore, ought to have some proportion to your offences; and certainly if you consider the infinite majesty of God, who is provoked by your sins; if you reflect on your own ingratitude, on so many benefits and fa-

vors which you have slighted, on so many graces which you have abused, you cannot possibly imagine, that so short and so small penances as are commonly enjoined in the sacrament of penance, bear any proportion to your offences. You have perhaps deserved to be forever punished by the devils in hell, you have ungratefully rebelled against God, preferred your own will and pleasure before the will and pleasure of the Almighty. Perhaps you are guilty of several mortal sins, and can you think that a few short prayers said perhaps with little or no attention, are sufficient to satisfy and atone for the guilt of so many crimes? Is this to do fruits worthy of penance?

Give me leave to put you in mind, how different your penances and satisfactions now are, from those that were enjoined to penitent sinners in former ages; you need but look on the penitential canons, to know what was the ancient discipline of the church for many ages: you will find several years of severe punishments and penance in sackcloth and ashes, in the exercise of prayer and fasting, enjoined by the ministers of the church, and practised by all that were truly penitent for sins, which alas! are now-a-days growing very common. For example, a person who had fallen from his religion was to do penance for the space of ten years; any one that had sworn by heaven, by God's holy name, or by any of his creatures, was to fast fifteen days with only bread and water; whosoever had been guilty of laughing or talking in the church during the time of divine service, his penance was to fast ten days with bread and water; if any one had cursed his parents, he was to undergo the like penance for forty days. For one sin of fornication was enjoined three years' penance; for that of adultery, five, or sometimes seven years' penance, and so proportionably as to other sins.

And what was this penance of so many years, or five, ten, fifteen, twenty years, and oftentimes to the end of their lives, which used to be enjoined for these sins? It was not to say some short prayers, but it was to fast most of the time, at least three

days a week with bread and water; it was to be separated from the holy communion; it was to stand upon Sundays and holidays at the church door, clothed with sackcloth, and there to beg the prayers of the faithful. This was what they called doing penance; these were the satisfactions enjoined in the sacrament of penance. Such was the practice and discipline of the church for many ages; and you may assure yourselves, dear Christians, although the church has judged it expedient to moderate the severity of her ancient discipline by condescending to the weakness of her children now-a-days, yet sin is no less offensive to Almighty God; the justice of God is the same. No less punishment is due to sin now than in former times; nay, if our crimes are greater, and more numerous than theirs, who lived in those pure times, our penance and satisfaction ought to be greater, according to what Almighty God prescribed to Moses, in the 25th of Deuteronomy, (v. 2.) "According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the stripes be." It is what we are again taught in the revelations of St. John, (chap. xviii. 7.) "As much as the sinner has indulged himself, and followed his unlawful pleasure, so much in proportion shall he be tormented and punished in this world, or the next."

The consideration of such severe penances as were formerly practised in the church, and which are now due to your sins, ought to make you blush at your own weaknesses: the very thoughts of so many years severe punishments of penance in hair-cloth, prayer and fasting, fright, tepid and loose livers: the greatest part of Christians now-a-days content themselves with doing their penance, but they are for doing little or no penance at all, they are for satisfaction which is performed in few words, in some short prayers, but little or no appearance in their works. In the mean time it is certain, that great sinners ought to be great penitents, and whatever penance is enjoined them in confession, seems little to those who are true converts, because it is nothing in comparison of what they have deserved; although

sacramental satisfaction is more meritorious, and of greater force than any other, in order to expiate our sins.

But you must not content yourselves with that little penance which is enjoined you when you come to the sacrament of penance: if you love God, and hate sin as you ought, you must join your own endeavors, and by voluntary satisfaction strive to repair the injury done to Almighty God, and punish yourself for your past offences: it is an obligation incumbent upon every one without exception. Is there any one that can say he was never guilty of sin? Grant that this were true, as it is most certainly false; that every one who pretends to be a Christian ought to imitate our Saviour Christ, and we find by the gospel that the life of Christ, though he had never sinned, nor could possibly sin, was notwithstanding a life of continual penance: but this is far from being your case, you were all born in sin, and besides that, you have all offended in many things; even the most virtuous are subject to many failings and imperfections; it is upon this account that they are indispensably obliged to do penance: for as St. Augustin says, there is no sin but must be punished. Again, how few are there that have not been some time or other guilty of mortal sins? If so, though it were but by the guilt of one mortal sin, you have then certainly deserved an eternal punishment, and all the satisfaction you can make, all the punishments you can inflict upon yourselves in this life, are all nothing to what you have deserved; you have then reason to cry out with the prophet Jeremias, "It is only by the mercy of God that you have not been lost for ever." You have then reason to acknowledge with holy David, (Psal. xciii. 17.) "Unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in hell." You must imitate the same royal penitent, who after he had sinned, had always his sins before his eyes. (Psal. l. 5.) This ought to be the disposition of every penitent sinner: he ought never to forget that by sinning he has deserved a place in hell, and to be for ever tormented with the devils in those scorching

flames. This consideration would make every one cry out with holy Job, (c. xxxiii. 27.) "I have sinned, and indeed I have offended, and I have not received what I deserved;" that is, the mercy of God has been pleased to spare me, to change the eternal punishment which I deserved, into a short and temporal punishment; for this reason I will not spare myself, but will seriously endeavor, by punishing myself, to repair the injury I have done to God, and make some satisfaction at least for my past ingratitude and disloyalty to Almighty God. But if this ought to be the disposition of every sinner who has had the misfortune by any mortal sin to have forfeited the grace of God, and to have been once guilty of an eternal punishment, what shall I say, or what can I say, to those who have fallen into a multitude of grievous sins? who, for a long time have been slaves to their unlawful passions, who can scarce number the mortal sins they have committed? All I can say is, that whether we consult the rules of justice, or the principles of faith, or the maxims of reason, we must from all of them conclude that the term of their penance must be the term of their life; they cannot but look upon the remainder of their days as too short to make sufficient satisfaction for so many sins. In fine, they must employ their utmost endeavors, and lay hold on all occasions to practice self-denial, to mortify their bodies and senses, to punish themselves here, that they may avoid those endless torments which they have often deserved, to appease the divine justice, to repair the injury done to the Divine Majesty by so many offences. But if you ask, in what manner every sinner that is truly penitent must practice this voluntary satisfaction, it is what I will now briefly propose to you.

Had you, dear Christians, the true spirit of penance, this would teach you, and make you comply with the manner of doing penance. The saints who had never been guilty of the like sins as you have committed, who had no such pressing motives as you have to do penance, they lived notwithstanding in the practice of severe

penances; because they were animated with the spirit of penance. How comes it to pass that they loved and desired to suffer, and you seek your own ease and content? that they labored to curb their natural inclinations, and punish themselves, and that you on the contrary, pamper and indulge yourselves, and hate all that is troublesome to nature? The true reason is, that they were led by the spirit of God, and you by the spirit of the world; their souls were possessed with the fear of God's judgments, their hearts were inflamed with the love of God's goodness, they had a lively horror and detestation of offending God above all things. These dispositions made all their labors, all their penances, all their satisfactions seem sweet and easy to them. But sinners have their affections quite turned another way; they are in love with the world, and in love with themselves; they hate to be deprived of their own will, and their sensual pleasures; they love nothing of the spirit of penance, and therefore they have as little of the practice of it; they have nothing at all of a penitential life, which is accompanied with mortification and voluntary satisfactions; these they leave to the saints, or at least to such as have shut themselves up in cloisters and monasteries, that is, they leave the practice of penance to those who stand in the least need of it. Can any thing be so unreasonable? Is it possible that men can think punishments due to the innocent and not to the guilty? that penance must be the practice of the saints, and that they who are sinners are to be exempt from it? To correct so dangerous a mistake, let me put you in mind of the admonition of St. John Baptist, "Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of penance.

There are many Christians who come, at least sometimes to the sacrament of penance, and yet are like the fig-tree which our Saviour came to, as we read in the 21st of St. Matthew, (v. 19.) he looked for figs upon it, but he found nothing but leaves; such is the condition of those who appear to make good purposes and resolutions; but they are purposes and appearances only, and

come to no effect. Others, perhaps, are a degree nearer to a true penance, and may be said not only to bring forth leaves, but buds and blossoms too; they keep their resolutions for a time, but any strong temptation, like a pinching wind, nips them in the bud, and all these flourishing blossoms, all these fair prospects, come to nothing. Others again bring forth some kind of fruits of repentance, they are willing to suffer something for their sins, but it is after an imperfect manner; they cannot be said to comply with the admonition of St. John Baptist, which is not only to bring forth fruits, but also "fruits worthy of penance;" that is, to continue in the practice of such a penance, and of such satisfactions as have some proportion to the number and grievousness of their sins.

But some may perhaps say, that our Saviour Christ has abundantly satisfied for the sins of the whole world, and therefore there can be no need of our satisfactions. It is true, dear Christians, the satisfactions of Christ were infinitely more than sufficient to satisfy the divine justice for all the sins and offences of mankind; yet they will avail you nothing unless they be applied to you, and they are chiefly applied to you by the holy sacraments, and particularly by the sacrament of penance; as to a remission of those sins you have fallen into after baptism. Besides, it is the will of God that you do something on your part, that you join your sufferings and your satisfactions with those of your Saviour Christ's, which makes them acceptable. For this reason St. Paul tells us, (1 Cor. ix. 17.) "That he chastised his body;" and he again tells the Colossians, (chap. i. 24.) that he fulfilled in his body those things that were wanting to the passion of Christ; that is, by punishing himself and suffering with Christ, he endeavored to partake of the sufferings, merits, and satisfactions of Christ; and doubtless there is no more effectual means to satisfy the divine justice of your offences, than by offering up to God with all humility, the satisfactions of his divine Son, par-

:icularly when they are offered up at the holy sacrifice of the mass.

Let me, therefore, advise you never to be present at that holy sacrifice without joining your oblation with that of the priest, and with all the devotion and humility you are capable of, begging of God to accept in satisfaction for your sins, the merits and satisfactions of his only Son: this is the first and chief way of satisfying for your sins.

Next, the satisfactory works of penance may be reduced to these three, prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds. Under prayer is included thinking or meditating, reading, or hearing of good books, instructing of others, and also being present at divine service, and those sermons and instructions which are given. And as all penitential and satisfactory works are supposed to include something that is more or less painful and troublesome to you, so you ought cheerfully and joyfully to undergo that difficulty, that trouble, that tediousness, which you perhaps find by experience in your morning and evening devotions, in spending Sundays and holidays well, and coming diligently to the service of God, and being present with devotion there; in frequenting the sacraments, and the like. He that does not perform well these satisfactions which belong to prayer, the service of God, and the sacraments, it is much to be feared he is for little or no satisfaction, he is for doing no penance at all.

Fasting is another means to satisfy for your sins; it is what the holy scripture in many places recommends to you, as well as the example of Christ and his saints; you can scarce read the life of any saint, but you will always find that they mortified themselves by fasting; and can you who are sinners, think much to keep exactly and willingly those fasts, at least that are commanded by the church? Under this of fasting, are likewise comprehended all those self-denials, and mortifications of the body and senses, as watching, kneeling, laboring, retirement, and whatsoever is troublesome and painful to you. Should you look

upon the example of the saints, and think well upon your own sins, what shame and confusion would it be to reflect, that they had so many contrivances to mortify themselves, that they did so much for the love of God, and to obtain heaven, and you so little!

A third means of satisfying is by alms-deeds, according to every one's abilities and circumstances. Remember the widow's two mites, which were so acceptable to Almighty God. "Redeem thou thy sins with alms," said the prophet Daniel to Nebuchadonosor. (c. iv. 24.) "Water quencheth a flaming fire, (says Ecclesiasticus, c. iii. 33.) and alms resisteth sins." In fine, all these three ways of satisfying for your offences were recommended by the angel to Tobias, (c. xii. 8.) "Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold."

Besides these means already mentioned, you may and ought to endeavor to satisfy the divine justice for the sins you have committed, by suffering with patience, with resignation, willingly and even joyfully, those crosses, those contradictions, these afflictions, whatsoever they are, that happen unto you by order of divine providence; though they happen unto you against your will, yet by receiving them in this manner, you make them voluntary, and by offering them up to God they become a grateful sacrifice, and a powerful means to satisfy for your offences.

Thus I have shewn you the necessity and obligation incumbent upon every one, to make it his serious endeavors, by works of penance to repair the injury done to the Divine Majesty by sin, and to satisfy as much as in you lies for your past offences. I have put you in mind, that the chief means is, by offering up to Almighty God the satisfactions of our Saviour Christ; to join prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds; to suffer patiently and willingly whatever crosses and afflictions happen to you by the divine appointment.

Be always mindful, that you must do worthy fruits of penance. The whole life of every Christian, how innocent soever he has

lived, ought to be a continual practice of penance, (says the Council of Trent.) it is in this that you must offer violence to yourselves. The kingdom of heaven, says our Saviour Christ, (Matt. xi. 12.) is to be taken by force, and they only obtain it who offer violence to themselves; at least there is no other way but that of penance for sinners to be saved, and obtain the kingdom of eternal bliss.

DISCOURSE

ON EXTREME UNCTION.

Is any man sick among you, let him bring in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him.—St. James v. 14, 15.

ALTHOUGH, dear Christians, the enemy of mankind, (the devil) always goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; yet there is no time of our lives that he attacks us with greater vigor than when we are departing out of this world; and the reason is, because he knows that then he hath but a short time to make his assaults upon us; for his hopes being then at the last, he strives all he can against us. "The devil is come down unto you, (says St. John, Apoc. xiv. 12.) having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time." Some he tempts to presumption, others to despair; some by too much love for friends and relations; some think of nothing but of the riches and pleasures which they are going to leave; others, through too much desire of life, will not hear of death, nor prepare themselves for it; but his common temptation is to terrify sinners with frights and fears of their past sins. "They shall come fearful in thought of their sins, and their iniquities which are against them shall convince them," says the wise man.

Hence St. Cyril of Alexandria writeth: "What terror," saith he, "what trembling, what a combat attends a soul going out of the body! since in that dreadful hour a multitude of wicked spirits will then be present to you, laying open and objecting to you all the sins you have committed in your life, either in thought, word, deed, or omission?"

St. John Climachus, a famous writer and worthy of credit, relates a remarkable example of this kind, of one Stephen, a hermit, who after he had lived a great part of his life in solitude, fasting, watching and praying, at last fell sick, and when he was at the point of death, the devil set upon him, and objected many things to him: sometimes he cried out (so that all who were present heard him;) so it is indeed, I confess I did it: but I have fasted and prayed so many years for it; other times he cried out, thou liest, I did not do it; and again he said, it is so indeed, but I have shed tears for it; yet notwithstanding, said he, there is need of mercy. This example ought to make you be wary in all your actions, and to fly sin, and all the occasions of sin; since this holy man, who had lived near forty years a retired and holy life, was so hard put to it at the hour of his death.

St. Hilarion, (whose perfections St. Hierom describes) when he came to die, was oppressed with such a fear and horror of death, that to encourage his soul, he said, (vide Vita Hilar.) "Go forth my soul, why dost thou fear? thou hast now served the Lord almost these seventy years, and art thou afraid to die?"

Now, if the saints themselves have been thus terrified at the hour of death, what may sinners expect, who have committed numberless and grievous sins, and that perhaps lately too, and have done little or no satisfaction, and have but few good works for their comfort? Upon this account our Saviour Christ was pleased to institute the sacrament of Extreme Unction, to help and defend us against the temptations of the devil, in that last and terrible hour For if Christ has instituted sacraments, that

we might be helped and succored both in our entrance into the church, and our improvement and progress therein, it is not to be thought that God would be wanting to us in our going out of this world, especially since we never want more help and assistance than at the hour of our death.

The Council of Trent speaking of this sacrament, tells us that all Christians ought to acknowledge the infinite goodness and mercy of Almighty God in the institution of this sacrament, by which he affords us such excellent means of procuring our salvation at every age, and in every state of life. At our birth, by baptism he confers upon us the life of grace: in a more advanced age he preserves and increases the same by the sacraments of confirmation and the holy eucharist; and, in fine, when we are at the point of quitting this world, by reason of the violence of some distemper, he has instituted the sacrament of extreme unction to procure for us a happy passage out of this world into a better. We have need, dear Christians, in these our last moments, upon which our eternal happiness or misery depends, of particular and powerful helps and graces; and for this reason our Saviour Christ, out of pure love and compassion for us, instituted this sacrament, as I shall first prove to you in this discourse. Secondly, I will lay before you the effects and necessity of it. And, thirdly, what care you ought to take in having speedy recourse to this sacrament in dangerous distempers, or such as put you in moral danger of death. Lastly, I will shew you the principal dispositions you ought to have, in order to receive the effects and graces thereof.

Extreme Unction is a true and proper sacrament of the new law, instituted by Christ for those who are in danger of death by sickness, or other inward infirmities, to blot out the relics of their sins, remaining through negligence or forgetfulness after the former sacraments; that thereby their souls may be strengthened against the temptations, and fierce assaults of the devil and death; or else that they may recover their bodily health, if it be expe-

dient to their salvation. It is called extreme unction, because it is only administered in extremity of sickness.

To prove that this sacrament was instituted by Christ, there needs no other proof than the clear words of St. James: "If any man be sick among you, let him bring in the priests of the church, and let him pray over them, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him." By such words, you see, the practice of the Catholic church is clearly proved, and extreme unction declared to be a sacrament; that is, an outward sign ordained by Christ for our sanctification. The outward sign is the external anointing with oil; which declares the proper matter of this sacrament; viz., oil of olives blest by a bishop: the form is the words uttered together with the unction, and is expressed by these words of the apostle; "Let them pray over him, anointing him with oil;" which, inasmuch as they are joined together with the matter, do make this sacrament. And that this outward sign causeth grace, the words following do declare, where it says, that sins are remitted, which cannot be but by grace being received. And hence it follows, that Christ instituted this sacrament; for the apostles had no power to institute such signs, neither could St. James have promised remission of sins by it, if Christ had not instituted and commanded it. It is true Luther rejects this epistle of St. James, (Luth. Præf. ad Nov. Testam.) denying it to be canonical, and calling it an epistle of straw; but the authority of the whole church has declared it to be canonical, and if the whole church be not sufficient for Luther, we will put Calvin into the balance against him, an author, at least of equal weight with him, who holds it for canonical. Calvin L. 3. Instit.

As to the ministers of this sacrament, these words of St. James, "Let him bring in the priests of the church," declare and determine; namely, such only as are actually promoted, in virtue of holy ordination unto episcopal or priestly function; so that when-

ever the scriptures in the New Testament, speaking of church ministers, use the word presbyter, or senior, it always means, says St. Hierom, (Epis. 85. ad Evang.) one invested with priestly or episcopal dignity. Besides, the fathers in the council of Trent, and all Catholic writers, understand by the words presbyters of the church, such only as are priests truly ordained, whether they be bishops or mere priests. Neither could the apostles mean by priests of the church lay-elders, as some of our adversaries would have it, because they are not church ministers taken in a proper sense.

And as to what Calvin and some of his followers assert, that the use of extreme unction was not designed for all ages, but only for the apostles' time, is absolutely false, and condemned by the council of Trent; (Sess. 14. Doct. de Sacram. Extr. Unct.) for inasmuch as the apostle asserts absolutely, putting no limitation of time, "if any be sick among you," he plainly shews extreme unction to be of perpetual use to the Catholic church to the end of the world, which is essential to a sacrament of the new law: and we find it has been practised in all ages. St. Augustin, St. Chrysostom, Origen, and other fathers, expressly exhort, (St. Aug. in Serm. 215.—St. Chrys. L. 3. de Sacred.—Orig. Hom. 2. in Levit.) that the sick do carefully receive this sacrament; and you will acknowledge they had great reason so to do, if you do but consider the admirable effects thereof.

These effects partly regard the body, and partly the soul, as you may gather from these words of St. James, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he be in sin, his sins shall be forgiven him;" that is to say, their prayers shall not be barren and without effect, if made with faith, and joined to this sacrament; because this sacred unction will bestow upon the sick person the health of his body, if Almighty God sees it more expedient and conducive to the salvation of his soul, as both the council of Florence and Trent declares. And I have sometimes seen sick persons given over by the physi-

cians, who were so persuaded of the efficacy of this sacrament even for the restoring of corporal health, that they preferred it to the best remedies prescribed by the most experienced physicians; and this sovereign antidote, both of body and soul, received by them with faith and confidence, restored them to their health; inasmuch, that it may be said of this sacrament alone, that as others only tend to the healing or strengthening of the soul, this, besides that effect, joins also the restoring of the health of the body impaired by sickness: it is for this reason, that this sacrament is called by the church in her councils, and by the holy fathers in their writings, *Medicina Corporis et Animæ;* that is to say, a remedy both for body and soul: and as natural remedies only receive their force and virtue from the nature which God has given to different plants and minerals, so this sovereign remedy receives also its force and efficacy from the blood and merits of Jesus Christ.

Now as to the effects which this sacrament produces in the soul, there are three or four principal ones. The first is the remission of sin; for although this sacrament is not principally instituted to confer the first grace, but only the increase of it, nevertheless if the sick person should be oppressed by any sin, even a mortal one, which he has through an innocent ignorance not confessed, it would be effaced by virtue of this sacrament, according to that of St. James, "If he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." You must here observe the apostle says, "If he be in sin," because he supposes the sick person has already received the sacrament of penance, and that thereby his sins have been remitted. But if he has not rightly accomplished confession, and knows it not, or if by human frailty he has committed a mortal sin after his confession, and is ignorant of it, that is to say, all our hidden or unknown sins whether mortal or venial, will be remitted by this sacrament.

The second effect is, that this sacrament destroys the woful remains or relics of sin. This appears from the council of Trent,

(Sess. 14. c. 1.) and from the words which are made use of in the form of this sacrament, which are as follows: "Through this holy unction, and by his own most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by thy sight;" and so of the other senses. But that you may comprehend what I mean by the relics of sin, I call it a certain weakness and spiritual languishing, which remains, and is the consequence of evil habits, contracted by the frequent acts of sin, which gives us a certain bent, and inclines our perverse wills to fall back again into sin. Some divines understand by the remains or relics of sins, all sins both mortal and venial of which you have not received the remission, and into which you have fallen after having received the sacrament of penance and communion; which may happen two ways, viz.: If any one, for example, after having confessed and communicated, shall have fallen into a mortal sin, which he should not remember, and not confessing should not obtain the remission of it; or if he had received the sacrament of penance and the eucharist, without due disposition: these are the remains which are effaced by the sacrament of extreme unction: and therefore in administering of this sacrament, we anoint the exterior senses, which are as the doors by which sins enter, to teach you that by this anointing you are purged and cleansed from all your sins; and for this reason the priest administering this sacrament, exhorts the sick person to excite in himself a hearty sorrow and contrition at the time when he anoints him.

Again: by the remains of sin is to be understood a certain perplexing interior grief, apprehension and anguish which is caused by the remembrance of your sins, and puts you in a concern and trouble, seeing yourselves ready to be presented before a terrible judge: your past sins will then appear more heinous than when you committed them; but the virtue of this sacrament is very effectual to remove the troubles and afflictions with which the soul of a dying person is often agitated; it will strengthen

and support her against the violent and continual attacks of her spiritual enemies; so that this reason alone, if there were no other, would oblige persons in danger of death by sickness, to have recourse to this divine remedy.

The third effect of this sacrament is, that it gives grace to the sick person to make a good use of all his pains and sufferings during his sickness, and disposes him to resign and give himself entirely up to the will of Almighty God, either for death or for life.

The last and principal effect of this sacrament, and for which it was chiefly instituted by our Saviour Christ, is to give us strength to surmount the assaults of the devil, which are much more violent and dangerous in these our last moments, than in any other part of our lives: for he sees the time approaches when he must either gain or lose his prey; he doubles his efforts, and makes use of all his art, to draw a poor soul into his snares: add to this, the power and number of these dreadful enemies, and the weakness and incapacity of resisting in the person attacked, never less capable of resisting than when his sickness and pains have weakened him more and more every day. And if your bodies, dear Christians, even in the time of health, are a clog upon the faculties of the soul, what do you think the poor soul can do at the point of her separation? Experience sufficiently teaches you, that the time of sickness is the most improper for spiritual exercises; and if that be so, what must you say of the last sickness? Frame to yourselves a sick man tormented with pains, which give him no rest, surrounded by his enemies, who seeing there is no time to be lost, never stir from his pillow, but continue to assault him with the most violent attacks. What can a sick man do in the midst of so many enemies, who have sworn his ruin; strong and cunning when he is weakened both in body and mind, by the force of his sickness? What will he answer for the sins they shall reproach him with? How will he reject their evil suggestions? What fright will he

be in at the sight of those horrid spectators, who will endeavor to make him believe there is no hope of heaven for him? If the greatest saints found themselves so surprised at this terrible combat, what must we think of a sinner, if God, out of his goodness, does not succor him? But by what means is this to be done? By means, dear Christians, of this sacrament, which strengthens us, encourages us, and furnishes us with arms to conquer our enemies.

From what I have said concerning the effects of this sacrament, you may easily see how necessary it is, and what care you ought to take, not to fail to procure it for yourselves and others in the time of sickness, since it may easily happen that a person may be saved by means of this sacrament, who otherwise would infallibly be lost without it: for the very nature and institution of it is, to supply in your last moments what has been wanting in the use of the other sacraments; it is for this reason the council of Trent calls it, "a perfection of penance:" whence it is easy to conclude, that this sacrament ought not to be neglected, since it is not only very profitable, but even very necessary to a great many persons.

It is a great abuse, and a very dangerous error, invented by the devil's malice to hinder you from overcoming his assaults in this combat of your lives, to believe that those who receive this sacrament will infallibly then die, and that after it there is no hope of life remaining. This gross error is an effect of the devil's hatred towards you, by which he makes it his endeavor to deprive you of the helps and means left you for avoiding his snares, and surmounting his temptations at your death. Another great reason why this sacrament is neglected and deferred when persons are in danger of death, is, for fear of frightening them: as if a person ought to be afraid to receive a remedy which may and will restore his health if it be profitable and conducing to his salvation. If then you have the least faith in the word of God, if you have the least love for your parents, children, friends, and

relations, you ought to be so far from hindering their receiving this sacrament, that you ought to procure it for them. But perhaps you will ask me how it comes to pass, that so few persons recover after having received this sacrament? I answer this objection with Cardinal Bellarmine, who gives two reasons for it. The first is, that sick persons, commonly speaking, defer so long the receiving this sacrament, that they seem to tempt God, and as it were oblige him to work a miracle; being the strength of the sick person is quite spent. The second reason is, because death is oftentimes more advantageous to the sick person than health would be. I add a third reason, that several sick persons receive this sacrament with very little attention, and scarce any devotion; but more particularly, because they have not a sufficient faith in the power and efficacy of this sacrament; relying much more on the force of natural remedies than this.

After having shewed you the necessity and efficacy of this sacrament, I hope there is none here present who would now neglect to renew it, when in moral danger of death. What therefore remains, is to set before you the dispositions you ought to have, to receive the graces annexed to this sacrament, and to receive it in such a manner as not to deprive yourselves, by your own faults, of those helps and advantages which are gained by means of it.

The first disposition, and as it were the principal one, is to be in the state of grace, because it is one of those sacraments which are instituted for the increase of the life of grace, and consequently, which presupposes the state of grace; for this reason the sick person ought first to make his confession; but if he be not in a condition so to do, he ought at least to excite in his soul a sorrow and hearty repentance of all his sins, joining his prayers with those present, in saying the *Confiteor*, to excite in himself the sentiments of compunction and a true sorrow.

The second disposition is, a lively faith in the force and efficacy of this sacrament, representing to himself the most wonderfu

effects of it, which I have reckoned up, confiding in the divine goodness to be made partaker of them: and thus prayer made with faith, joined to this sacrament, will bring relief to the sick person.

The third disposition is, to receive the sacrament with sentiments of piety and devotion, by making acts of faith, of love, of confidence, of acceptance of his sickness, of resignation to the divine will, repeating often these acts, and making them proceed more from the heart than from the lips, and letting this be his employment, even under the greatest anguish of his distemper. Let him also remember, at the anointing of every sense, to beg pardon of Almighty God for the sins committed by a bad use of them.

The fourth and last disposition is, to have a particular devotion to our Saviour Jesus Christ, agonizing for our salvation in the garden of Gethsemane, putting ourselves in the same holy dispositions with him, and like him offering to God the Father, our bodies, our souls, and our lives, in a spirit of sacrifice; giving him thanks through the merits of his beloved Son, for all the graces and favors we have received from his divine bounty, during the whole course of our lives. We must also, at that time, in a more particular manner beg the prayers and intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary, of our patrons, our angel-guardian, and the saints to whom we have a particular devotion. Remember then, I beseech you, these dispositions, and neglect not to apply so sovereign and effectual a remedy whensoever you shall be attacked by any dangerous sickness. Parents, procure this sacrament for your children; and children, procure it for your parents; friends and relations, for one another; masters of families, for your servants; and do not deprive them of so powerful a help in their greatest need.

O! dear Christians, ought we not a thousand times to bless Almighty God, in that he has been pleased to institute this sacrament, this powerful remedy? Ought we not to beg of those who

shall be near us in our last sickness, not to delay procuring us this sacrament to the last extremity? Letting them know, that you are well persuaded the worthy receiving of this sacrament cannot but be very advantageous for both body and soul, and that the best proof they can give us in our sickness of a true and sincere friendship, is to procure this sacrament for us betimes, and whilst we are in our senses, that we may be able to enter into those dispositions I have here mentioned, and to make us partake of those graces which cannot fail of bringing us to eternal happiness.

DISCOURSE

ON THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood.—1 Tim. iv. 14.

As Christ, dear Christians, has founded a church here upon earth, it is not to be doubted, but that he has ordained and instituted rulers, to keep and govern this his church in discipline, and to preserve it in unity. This is what St. Paul assures us of in his epistle to the Ephesians, (ch. iv. 11.) where he tells us, that Christ has given to his church, (not every man, but) certain men, to be apostles, pastors, and preachers, who being, as it were, his ambassadors, should instruct and edify his church, and keep his people in unity and faith. And as the sacraments are necessary for man's salvation, so it is necessary for certain men to be ordained, and authorized by God, to administer them faithfully for man's salvation.

We find by the holy scriptures, that there have been always temples and holy places, wherein God appointed priests, that they might teach and instruct the people, and offer sacrifice: wherefore, God said to Aaron, (Exod. xxix. 1.) "And thou shalt also

do this, that they may be consecrated to me in priesthood;" who may teach my people, and offer sacrifice for them. From hence we may learn, that no man ought to usurp, or take upon him to administer, that which pertains to the church of Christ, without sufficient commission from him; and more especially since Christ has been pleased to institute and ordain the sacrament of holy orders, wherein grace or spiritual power is given to certain Christian men, (by the outward sign of imposition of the bishop's hands upon them,) to exercise effectually the public administration of the church, whereby whatsoever they do in the church, according to the institution of Christ and his church, is ratified, and accepted of by Almighty God.

What therefore I propose in this discourse is, first, to prove to you in short, from scripture, councils, and fathers, that holy orders is a true and proper sacrament instituted by Christ. Secondly, I will show you the effects of it, and the power given thereby Thirdly, the different degrees of orders, and the office of each degree. And lastly, the honor, respect and obedience, the laity ought to have for the bishops and priests of God's church.

The greatest part of our adversaries, dear Christians, deny holy orders to be a sacrament; in order, therefore, to prove the contrary, we must first consider, what a sacrament in general is, viz., "An outward or visible sign of invisible grace, instituted by Christ our Lord, by which grace is given to him who worthily receives it." Now it is certain that holy orders is a visible sign of invisible grace, and that by divine institution, which alone can annex the gift of grace to any outward rite, or ceremony.

The outward and visible sign is found in the imposition of the bishop's hands, and prayer; for we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that the seven deacons were ordained in this manner, "the apostles praying laid their hands upon them." St. Paul and St. Barnabas were ordained after this manner, as we read in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts.

The invisible grace conferred by this imposition of hands is

attested by St. Paul, (1 Tim. iv. 14.) "Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with imposition of the hands of the priesthood." And in his second epistle to Timothy, (ch. i. 6.) "I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee by the imposition of my hands.

The general council of Chalcedon, which was held in the year of our Lord 451, expressly says, (Act. xv. ap. 2.) that the grace of the Holy Ghost is conferred in ordination by imposition of the bishop's hands.

The general council of Florence also declares holy orders to be a sacrament, and even calls it the sixth: this council both Grecians and Latins approve of. In fine, all the councils of the church have always acknowledged and looked upon holy orders to be a true and proper sacrament.

Let us now see what the ancient fathers and docters of the church say to this point.

Dionysius, who lived in the second age affirms, (5 Eccles. Hierarch. de ritu Ord.) that by holy orders grace is given to him who is ordained.

St. Cyprian, who lived in the third age, asserts (De operibus Cardinalibus) the same doctrine.

St. Ambrose, who lived in the fourth age, says, (L. de dignitat. Sacerd. c. 5.) that "Man imposeth his hands, but God conferreth the grace."

And St. Chrysostom, who lived in the same age, says, (S. Chrysost. de Sacerd.) that "priesthood is finished on earth, but ought to be referred into the number and order of celestial things."

In the fifth age, Theodoret teaches, (In 1 Tim. v.) that "the grace of the Holy Ghost is given in ordination."

I should never have done, were I to cite all the holy fathers upon this head: let it then suffice to hear what the great St. Augustin says upon this subject, in his second book against the epistle of Parmenian, proving that the sacrament of order can-

not be lost, because baptism cannot: (I. 2. cont. Parm. & L. 3 de Bapt. c. 1.) "Let them explain," says he, "how the sacrament of the baptised cannot be lost, and the sacrament of one ordained can: for if both of them are sacraments, of which no body doubts, (says he,) why cannot that be lost if this may be?" Here you see he calls orders a sacrament: he shews it to be a proper and true one, by comparing it with baptism; he assures us that no one doubted the truth of it; and if St. Augustin may be credited, not only all the writers of his time, but also all the faithful did believe the same.

Now as to the effects of this sacrament: the proper and peculiar effect is to give grace to exercise worthily the ecclesiastical functions; by which a man is qualified for the due discharge of his duty, and for the administering of the sacraments, even as by the grace of baptism every one is made fit to receive the other sacraments. There is also besides grace, another effect which is called a character, that is to say, a kind of spiritual mark, or seal in the soul, which always remains in it; and this is conferred by baptism, confirmation, and order, of which St. Paul seems to speak in his second epistle to the Corinthians, (c. i. 22.) where he says, that "God has sealed us." So that he who has once had the honor of being made a priest, can never be so degraded as to lose his character, and become a layman again.

From what has been already said, you may easily see, that the authority and power of the evangelical priesthood, far excels that of the law of nature, or the Levitical priesthood; for the evangelical priesthood is derived from Christ our Lord, who was a priest, according to the order of Melchisedech; and Christ having in himself the supreme power of giving grace, and forgiving sins, has left this power to his church, not boundless, as he himself had it, but limited to the use of the sacraments. This power, not only of remitting sins, but also of consecrating and offering the true and real body and blood of our Lord, so far excels all human reason and understanding, that there is nothing in this

world which can be compared to it: and this is what we call the power of order. But besides they have also a power of jurisdiction over the mystical body of Christ, for the government of the faithful, to direct and lead them to eternal happiness. Our Saviour was sent by his eternal Father, and the apostles were sent by him: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you," (John xx. 21.) said Christ to his apostles; whereby he gave them his power, and established that ecclesiastical authority, which was by succession to continue always in his ministers, even to the end of the world. (Matt. xxviii. 20.) "For this cause, (says St. Paul to Titus, i. 5.) I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and shouldst ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed thee."

Thus without interruption, from age to age, has the power and authority which Christ committed to his church, been transmitted through succeeding generations; thus have been, and are continued priests, to administer lawfully God's sacraments to the faithful, and to govern them in what appertains to God and their souls, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins, &c. "And therefore he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins." (Heb. v. 3.) Thus comes it, that "we have an altar, whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle." (Heb. xiii. 10.) Thus we have a priesthood not derived from the law of Moses, but from Christ our Lord; who came to abolish the old law, the old sacrifices, and give us the new law, the law of grace, and not of servitude; and so vouchsafed to institute in his church a new priesthood, a new sacrifice of his body and blood; which only such priests have power to offer, as are ordained according to the rites of the Catholic church; which visible sacrifice, as the reformed ministers reject both in and by their ordination and practice, they should quit all claim to the priesthood instituted by Christ; for the proper office of priests is to offer sacrifice, so that there can be no priests, where there is no power to offer sacrifice.

Nor must any one take this honor to himself, but only he who is called by God. (Heb. v. 4.) And he is said to be called of God, who is called by the lawful ministers of God's church. The church examines first the purity of their intention, and the sufficiency of their virtue and learning, before she chooses them: and then she consecrates them with all the solemnity of those religious rites, which are called the sacrament of order, or sacred ordination. And since priesthood is so holy, and the ministry or function so divine, therefore that the exercise of it might be performed more worthily, and with greater veneration, it was convenient that in the regular disposition of the church, there should be many different orders of ministers, distributed in such a manner, that all who by the clerical tonsure are marked for this design, might ascend by these lesser orders, viz., Porter, or door-keeper, Lector, or reader, Exorcist and Acolyth. From these minor orders they are promoted to the greater; as that of Sub-deacon, who is the first of those that are called holy; then a Deacon, and lastly, of Priest. The holy scriptures not only make express mention of priests, but also of deacons; (Tim. iii.) and though it makes no mention of the order of sub-deacons, nor any of the four lesser orders, yet from the first beginning of the church, their names were known to be in use, though not in equal rank; the sub-deacon is reckoned among the great orders, by the fathers and holy councils; in which we also read frequently of the lesser.

The first order is porter, or door-keeper, whose office is to keep the keys of the church, sacristy, and treasury.*

The second is lector, or reader, whose office is to recite aloud the lessons in the divine office, and formerly to instruct the faithful in the first rudiments of the Christian religion.†

The third is that of exorcist, whose function is to read the

* Of this order see Conc. Tolet. C. 6. & Trid. Sess. 23. de Reform. & S. Isid. L. de Eccl. C. 14. & Baron. Annal. Eccl. An. 34. N. 287.

† Of this order see S. Cypr. Epis. 33. & Tertul. de Præscript. C. 61. & Baron. Annal. Eccl. Anno. 34. N. 287.

exorcisms and prayers of the church over those who are possessed with unclean spirits. Of this order see the authors above cited.

The fourth degree is that of acolyth, and is the last of those that are called lesser; whose office is to serve at Mass, light the candles in the church, prepare the wine and water, and attend the greater ministers in the time of sacrifice.* All these lesser orders are conferred by receiving from the bishop the instruments or books belonging to their respective offices, and by solemn prayer prescribed in the pontifical.

The first of the three greater, which are called holy or sacred, is the order of sub-deacon, whose office is to serve the deacon at the altar; he prepares the linen, the chalice and paten, the bread and wine; he reads the epistle, and gives water to the bishop or priest, when they wash their hands for the sacrifice. The bishop, before he ordains him, declares, that none are to be received into this order, who do not resolve to receive and observe the law of perpetual continency. He is also obliged to the canonical hours of the church office.

The second is the order of deacon, which is conferred upon him by the imposition of the bishop's hands, and by delivering to him the book of the gospels. His office is to assist the bishop or priest in the sacrifice of the Mass; and in the absence of the priest he may explain the gospel, and baptize, &c.

The third and highest of all sacred orders is that of priest, whose office is chiefly to offer up to God the sacrifice of the Mass, for the living and the dead, and to administer all the sacraments, except confirmation and holy orders; and also to remit sins, and to assist the bishop in governing and preaching by commission from him. These are the proper functions of the priestly order, which though it be only one, yet it has different degrees of dignity and power: first the priests, secondly the bishops, and thirdly the pope.

* Of this order see S. Cypr. Epist. 65. & Baron. Annal. Eccl. An. 78. N. 80.

From hence we may gather what honor, reverence, and obedience, are due to the bishops and priests of the church. For as they are ordained by God to be the judges over his people, in such things as appertain to the salvation of their souls, and also to be their govenors and rulers in all that regards religion, and likewise to be their ghostly and spiritual fathers: and seeing at the same time how much Almighty God has honored them, in giving them a dignity and power in their consecration above all other creatures; power, I say, even over the natural body of Christ, to consecrate, offer, and distribute it to the faithful; and a power over his mystical body the church, to remit or retain sins, to administer the sacraments, and do the sacred functions of the character imprinted in them: a power so much more excellent, eminent, and higher than other dignities, as the spirit surpasses the body, and heaven the earth. St. Paul says, (Heb. vii. 7.) that it is certain, that he who has a right to give his benediction to another, is more noble and higher than he to whom the benediction is given. Now, priests give their benediction to princes, kings, and emperors; their dignity, therefore, considered in its spiritual capacity, is greater. It is therefore, a precept incumbent upon all the faithful, both men and women, of what state and condition soever, to love, reverence, and obey the ministers or priests of God's church, in such a manner, as the nature and dignity of their office require; for St. Paul says, (1 Tim. v. 17.) that those who execute the office of priests, and govern the people, are worthy of double honor. And again, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, v. 12, 13, he teaches us, saying, "We beseech you, brethren, to know them who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, that you esteem them more abundantly in charity for their work's sake." By this exhortation of St. Paul, every one may see what honor and respect we ought to have for the ministers of God's church, and that not merely upon account of their virtue or learning, which alone is sufficient to make any man be esteemed and valued; but we

ought to love them, and respect them chiefly upon account of their character and labor, as being the instrumental cause of our spiritual life; for by them we are made Christians, and received into the church: by them we are delivered from our sins, and reinstated into the grace and favor of Almighty God: by them we receive his blessings, and are nourished and fed, not only with the spiritual food of God's word, but also with the heavenly food of Christ's most precious body and blood in the blessed sacrament of the eucharist; and by them we offer to God the dreadful sacrifice; in fine, by them the sacraments are administered, and the empyreal heaven is opened to us. We ought, therefore, to have them in reverence, (according to the admonition of St. Paul,) "as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." (1 Cor. iv. 1.) Remembering that he who heareth and obeyeth them heareth and obeyeth God; and he who disobeys them, disobeys God, (Luke x.) for the love and reverence which is given to God's ministers is given to God, and the contempt of them is the contempt of God. This is what God himself declared to Samuel, (whom the people of Israel refused to have to rule over them,) in these words, "They have not only contemned and rejected thee, but me also." (1 Reg. viii.) So that generally the honor or contempt which is shewed towards God's ministers redounds to God himself; as appears by the punishment of the contempt which the Jews shewed to Moses, (Num. xii.) which Almighty God looked upon as done to himself. We must not, therefore, neglect and despise them who are the judges of the consciences even of kings; them whom the prophet Malachi calls the "angels of our Lord;" (Mal. ii. 7.) them who are the judges of God's people, ambassadors of his Divine Majesty, mediators between God and men. We respect ambassadors, even those of barbarous and infidel kings; with how much more reason then should we respect those whom the King of Kings doth send to us?

Again, besides the love, reverence, and respect, which we owe

to the bishops and priests of God's church, we must also be obedient to them, in all that appertains to our eternal salvation, and the government of the church; for to them our blessed Saviour has committed the keys of his kingdom, by which they have a power and jurisdiction over all Christians for the conservation and increase of virtue, and good of the church; and this power all Christians ought to obey under pain of mortal sin; since this power comes from God; so that he who disobeys this power, disobeys God, (says St. Paul to the Romans, c. xiii.) We must, therefore, be careful how we despise and contemn the authority of the ministers of the church, since St. Paul exhorts all men to be obedient to their spiritual rulers: "Obey your prelates, (says he,) and be subject to them, for they watch over you, as being to render an account of your souls."

Besides, we must not only honor them, love them, and obey them, but we must also succor and relieve them in their corporal necessities, and that with a free heart and good will; for as St. Paul says, (1 Cor. ix. 7.) "Who serveth as a soldier at any time, at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?" And again in another place he says, (Rom xv. 27.) "If the gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they ought also in carnal things to minister to them."

Is it not astonishing to see the different behavior of Christians now-a-days to the ministers of Christ, to what it was formerly? In former ages we read of princes, kings, and emperors, falling down at their feet, with the most profound reverence and respect. We read that St. Francis had so great a respect for priests, (See Bonav. in ejus vit.) that he was used to say, that if he should meet an angel and a priest together, he would honor the priest in preference to the angel. We read also that St. Antony, the great patriarch of so many thousand hermits, had such a veneration and respect for priests, that if he met one, he fell upon his

knees, and rose not up till he had received his benediction. We also read, that the emperor Constantine the Great had so great a respect for bishops and priests, that he would not sit down in the Council of Nice, till after all the bishops, and even then only upon a seat below them all, and with their approbation.

Behold, dear Christians, how much the bishops and priests were respected in those days, but now, alas! things are come to that pass, that they are slighted and contemned, and looked upon as menial servants; nay, they are frequently made the sport and ridicule of the company, and their conduct upon all occasions censured; and what is still worse, if they hear of any of their failings and imperfections, they are sure to publish them; whereas we ought to imitate the example of Constantine the Great, who, as Theodoret relates, when he was present at the Council of Nice, many libels were brought to him, filled with the ill behavior and vices of some priests, he would not read them, but commanded them to be publicly burnt, saying, that it was a wicked thing to publish the vices of those whom God had constituted to be our judges and rulers: it is also related of him, that he should say, that if he saw a priest commit adultery, he would cover him with his cloak, for fear any one should see him. This sentiment of his is comformable to that of St. Hierom, who thus writes, "Far be it from us, says he, that we ever speak amiss of those who succeed in the ministry of Christ."

To conclude—Consider well on what I have here said concerning the exalted dignity of priesthood, and your duty to them; which I speak not for their glory or honor; no, nothing less; for their exalted state ought to be a motive of humiliation to them, knowing their own unworthiness, and the great charge they have upon their hands, and the strict account they must one day give of their ministry: I say, I speak not this for their honor, but for your advantage; to the end that you may never be so unfortunate as to fall under the heavy displeasure of Almighty God, by your disobedience and irreverent behavior to his minis-

ters: and that you may obtain his blessing, like obedient and dutiful children, whom he will at the last day reward with the fruition of his glory in the kingdom of heaven.

DISCOURSE ON MATRIMONY.

Marriage honorable in all, and the bed undefiled.—Heb. xiii. 4.

You must not, dear Christians, imagine from these words of St. Paul, that marriage is honorable amongst all sorts of men, as our adversaries would have it; for if so the marriage of a brother with a sister would be honorable; and that of those who have vowed continence to whom the same apostle says it is damnable. (1 Tim. 5.) So that the true meaning of the apostle is, that marriage is honorable in all things; that is, in all its parts and circumstances. It is honorable in the intention, when the intention is right, and according to the true end of marriage. It is honorable in the celebration of it; and, in fine, it is honorable in the effects.

Of this great sacrament five things seem to me proper to be explained. First—What matrimony is, and by whom it was instituted. Secondly—Whether it be a sacrament and causes grace. Thirdly—What are the effects of it. Fourthly—What are the obligations and dispositions of those who are about to enter upon the state of matrimony. And lastly—What are the obligations of those who are already married. These shall make up the subject of this discourse.

Marriage is a contract actually made by mutual consent of one man and one woman; that is, between two lawful persons, who give and take one another for husband and wife, till death parts them.

It was first instituted by God himself between our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the earthly paradise, and had God's blessing upon it, as the only approved means for the lawful propagation

of mankind; this we find in the first chapter of Genesis, (v. 28.) where we read, that God blessed them, and said, *Increase and multiply.* This institution was afterwards confirmed by our Saviour Christ, as we read in the 19th chapter of St. Matthew, where Christ says, (v. 6.) "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." And then it was our blessed Saviour raised it to a new dignity, by making it a sacrament of the new law, and so to give grace to those who worthily receive it.

But this is what our adversaries will not allow, for they deny that matrimony is a sacrament, though St. Paul expressly calls it so in his epistles to the Ephesians, (c. v. 31.) where, speaking of matrimony, he says, "And they shall be two in one flesh:" this is a great sacrament, or mystery, as the Protestants translate it; which words are (according to what the church and fathers teach,) to be understood of a sacrament, properly speaking Thus Tertullian, St. Augustin, and St. Ambrose understood them.* Now it is certain, that all the sacraments of the new law confer grace. Again, the words following, "but I say in Christ, and in his church," do signify that matrimony represents the union of Christ with his church, which union consists in grace and charity; so that it evidently shews, that there is grace and mutual charity conferred upon the married couple, towards each other; whereby matrimony is truly a sign of mysterious representation of the indissoluble union of Christ and his church.

Besides, it has always been looked upon and acknowledged as a sacrament in the Catholic church, and has all the requisites of a sacrament. The outward sign are the words or tokens, expressing the mutual consent of the parties: the inward grace is the holy union of their hearts in perfect love. For it cannot be imagined, that Christ would confine marriage to one person as he does, (Matt. xix. 6.) and that for life, without such an allowance of grace as might make the burthen supportable. This

* Tertul. L. de Monog. S. Aug. de Nup. & Concup. c. 10. & 12. St. Amb. in Epist. ad Eph.

doctrine has always been believed, and taught by the fathers and councils of the church.

St. Irenæus, (L. 1. c. 1.) who lived about fifteen hundred years ago, calls matrimony a sacrament. "By all means, says he, they ought to meditate on the sacrament of marriage."

St. Cyril, (c. 2. in Joan. 52.) who lived upwards of fourteen hundred years ago, teaches, "That Christ sanctified wedlock, and gave grace to marriage."

St. Ambrose, (in c. 5. de Ephes. ver. 32. & 1. 1. de Abrah. c. 7.) who lived above thirteen hundred years ago, says, "That there is a great sacrament, or mystery, in the unity of man and wife."

St. Augustin, (Tract. 9. in Joan.) who lived above thirteen hundred years since, says, "That which in Christ and the church is a great sacrament, this in all husbands and wives is an inseparable sacrament of conjunction." And again, (L. de Fide & Operibus, c. 7.) "In the church, says he, not only the bond, but also the sacrament of marriage is commended." And in another place, (L. de Bono Conjugii, c. 18.) "In the marriage of our women, says he, the sanctity of the sacrament is more worthy than the fruitfulness of the womb."

The council of Florence (which was held in the year of our Lord, 1438,) defines, that there are seven sacraments, all which give grace to the worthy receivers: (See Litera Unionis in Decret. Eugen.) and the seventh sacrament is that of matrimony, which is a sign of the union of Christ and his church, according to that of the apostle; "This is a great sacrament, but I say in Christ and his church."

The council of Trent also declares matrimony to be a sacrament, and that it gives grace to the worthy receivers. (Sess. 24 can. 1.)

Let us now see what are the effects of this sacrament. First—It gives grace to the married couple mutually to love one another Secondly—To bear with one another's weakness, and to live in

Christian peace together. Thirdly—To restrain the violence of concupiscence, and to be loyal and faithful to each other Fourthly—To support more easily with Christian courage, the difficulties and burdens of a married state. Fifthly—To conduct well their family, and breed up their children in the love and fear of God. Lastly—It confirms an inseparable union, and gives an increase of sanctifying grace.

But perhaps it may be asked, if the sacrament has so many happy effects, how comes it then that we find so few of them appear in the greatest part of marriages? My answer is, because very few come with the due dispositions and preparations as they ought, to receive this sacrament; they consult not God in their choice, but only their own lust and temporal interest; they prepare not themselves for it, by putting themselves in the state of grace; and too often by their sinful lives and brutal sensuality, they lose the grace of God, and so frustrate the effects of this sacrament; and therefore are justly punished with the quite contrary unhappy effects of impatience, quarrelling, hatred, and jealousy.

Now as to the obligations of such as are about to be married or who are likely to settle in that state: you must first observe, that every one before he engages himself in any state, calling, or profession, ought first of all seriously to consult with Almighty God. Secondly—He ought to advise with such persons as he has reason to judge are capable of giving him good counsel, according to the admonition of Ecclesiasticus, (c. xxxii. 24.) "My son, says he, do nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done." Every one ought by fervent prayer to recommend himself, by his actions, and his designs to Almighty God that he may obtain a blessing from heaven upon his undertakings. But if this ought to be our constant method of proceeding, before we undertake any thing of moment; it is chiefly necessary for all those who engage themselves in a state of life, which of itself is unchangeable, such as marriage is. For in such a case, it is

not in their power to undo what they have once done. The knot being once tied nothing but death can dissolve it; and therefore, they cannot be too cautious in their choice, when it is evident that both their temporal happiness in this life, and their eternal happiness in the next, do in a great measure depend upon it.

When, therefore, any one begins to think of marrying, and that there are any proposals, or advances offered, towards it, let every one imitate the example of the patriarch Isaac, of whom we read in Genesis, (c. xxiv. 63.) that when his father Abraham had sent his servant to treat about his marriage with Rebecca, he went out into the fields to pray: he did not think it enough that he had a prudent, wise, and virtuous father, who would take all possible care to choose a good wife for him; but withal he judged it absolutely necessary to apply himself to Almighty God, by prayer and meditation, to beg that Almighty God would order and dispose of him, as he knew it most convenient for his honor and glory, and for his private good.

The first thing therefore to be done is, to recommend an undertaking of this nature to God by prayer; they ought to follow the example of those who were married in Canaan: they invited our Saviour, his blessed mother, and disciples to the marriage; they must, therefore, invite our Saviour to the marriage; that is, they must beg of him to give a blessing to their marriage; they must beg the intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary, the apostles, and all the saints, that if they marry, it may be, not to be miserable here, and perhaps hereafter, but that it may be for their temporal and eternal good.

Next, they who are about to engage in a married state if they have parents alive, they are to have a regard to their will and directions: as they are commanded to honor and obey their parents in all that is not sinful, they are not to dispose of themselves in marriage without their consent and approbation. It is true, I must deny but there may be some exceptions in this, when

their parents are certainly unreasonable: and when it is evident they are biased by some private interest or ends; so that in hindering or promoting the marriage of their children, they give them advice which is no ways for their good. But if any such thing should happen, as it may sometimes, particularly when parents are of a different religion from their children; yet even in such cases, they ought to consult and follow the counsel and advice of such discreet persons as they can confide in: for they ought to be careful in a concern of so great importance, not to be led by their own passion, inclination, and fancy.

Alas! dear Christians, this is very often the case of such as marry; for instead of consulting God, their parents, and their directors, they are guided by love, passion, inclination, and fancy. All these are blind guides: and if the blind lead the blind, what wonder, as the scripture says, if they fall into the ditch? It is no wonder at all, if by such engagements, and by such marriages, they make their lives miserable; and what is chiefly to be deplored by such inconsiderate proceedings, involve themselves in such inconveniencies, as make them eternally miserable in the next life. It is no wonder, I say, that they who marry upon such motives, live in continual dissensions, jealousies, and what not? It is particularly true of such marriages, what St. Paul says, they shall have the tribulation of the flesh, they shall have neither peace of mind, nor quietness in their families; continual crosses, tribulations, and misery are their everlasting lot.

Again, such as engage in a married life must take care to marry with a good intention. The chief end of marriage is, to have children, and when they have them, to breed them up in the love and fear of God. We have an excellent instruction relating to this in the book of Tobias, who may justly be proposed as an example to all married persons. We there read, that Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, was married successively to seven husbands, and every one of them the first night of their marriage, died, notwithstanding this, the angel who accompanied young

Tobias, in the shape of a man, and conducted him to the house of Raguel, advised him to marry this same woman: young Tobias replied, I have heard, says he, that this young woman has been married to seven husbands, and every one of them have been found dead the first night of their marriage and killed by the devil: it is true, says the angel, yet you need not fear upon that account: for I will shew you, says the angel, why this happened, and who they are over whom the devil has had such power: they are men who marry in such a manner that God is far from their minds; they follow the suggestions of their lusts and their passions, like horse and mule, who have no understanding, and over such the devil has a power. But for your part, says the angel, when you marry, you shall take your wife in the fear of God, with a desire of children, and not through lust and passion. He did so, and was happy in his marriage. Those seven, before him, who had married to satisfy their lust, and irregular inclinations, were by God's permission killed by the devil: but as to Tobias, who married with the fear of God, and with a good intention, the devil had no power over him.

You will perhaps ask me, if it be not lawful to marry in consideration of riches, beauty, quality, or some other conveniencies relating to the present life? My answer is, that none of these ought to be the only nor the chief motive in marriage; the end of which is to have posterity, if it be the will of Almighty God; but these are not to be condemned when they are only secondary reasons and motives for preferring one person who has them, before another who wants them. But virtue and good humor are doubtless the best and most lasting qualifications which they who marry ought to have in view.

There are besides these, which I have already touched upon, some other instructions necessary for those who are about to marry. They should be very careful what promises they make to one another. I would not have persons to make any promise at all of marrying beforehand; for there are often very great

inconveniencies which happen from such promises, because promises once made, are to be kept, unless some very considerable changes happen; and many times persons repent themselves of promises rashly made, which they know not how to be freed from, and yet are very unwilling to perform, which makes their life and condition very uneasy afterwards.

And again, promises and contracts relating to marriage are very different. A promise, properly speaking, is when the parties oblige themselves to marry hereafter, by using such words and expressions as signify that they will hereafter marry, &c. But sometimes the parties are either so rash, or so ignorant, that they use the very words of marriage, or some expressions equivalent, which signify that they take one another at present, and from this time afterwards. A contract made in this manner is no less than a clandestine marriage, where the discipline of the council of Trent is not received, as it is not in our kingdom: and then the contract is so binding, that no power on earth can dissolve it. It is notwithstanding a very unlawful, and sinful way of contracting, and such clandestine marriages are always condemned, as considerable transgressions; every one therefore ought by all means to avoid, and abhor such kind of private contracts.

They ought also to be very careful in the time of courtship, not to admit of any kind of liberties or familiarities, which, alas, are too common among some sort of people; and which persons of a better education would be altogether ashamed of; they ought to be as much ashamed to permit them, as I am to speak of them: their courtship is something like that of dumb creatures, they are rude in their actions, because they know no better way of expressing their love and kindness: but they ought to reflect, that as long as they are not married, what design or resolution soever they have of marrying, they are not to use any familiarities, which they may not as lawfully do, or admit of in any other person whom they never intend to marry; and any action which is of itself against modesty, is always an offence against the in-

finite majesty of God, to whom they must one day give an account.

In fine, to put an end to what belongs to this point; when persons are resolved to marry, and come to celebrate their marriage, they must use all means to be in the state of grace; and, therefore, before marriage they are to confess the sins they find themselves guilty of, that they may put no impediment to the grace of God, which is given in this sacrament. But now as to the duties and obligations of those who are already married.

The first is, towards Almighty God; that is, they must take particular care, that neither the solicitude, nor the love which they bear to one another, do any ways diminish their love towards Almighty God; this is what too often happens, and what St. Paul admonishes the Corinthians of in his first epistle, "I would have you, (says he, ch. vii. 32.) to be without solicitude." Not but that they are to be commended for taking care of their temporal concerns, and it is what they are obliged to do; but then they must remember the admonition of our blessed Saviour, (Matt. vi. 33.) "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God;" which they do not comply with, unless they love God above all things, with their whole hearts, &c.

The second duty of man and wife is, to love one another, to be an assistance and comfort to each other in all occurrences of life, in adversity, as well as in prosperity; to keep an inviolable fidelity to each other, and to make it always their endeavor to bear patiently with the infirmities, passions, and disagreeable tempers of each other; it is what St. Paul tells the Galatians, (ch. vi. 2.) "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ." This disposition of bearing patiently with each other, and with the vexations and troubles that happen in a married state, is absolutely necessary to preserve that peace, union, and concord, which ought to be in all families.

The third duty of husband and wife is, if God sends them any children to love them; but then they must let their love be dis-

creet, and not to run into extremes by excessive fondness, in complying with them almost in every thing they can wish or desire; or by neglecting them, in letting every pettish humor grow up with them, so that they will hardly ever be reclaimed. But the chief care and concern of parents, in regard to their children, is to educate them well in the knowledge of their duty towards God, to fit them for heaven more than for earth.

But there is still another obligation, which must crown a parent's care, and this is to give a good example to their children; this will prevent harsher methods. Parents, let me exhort you not to think so much on the difficulty of the task, as on the eternal reward it will procure for you and your children.

CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL UNION
BV4655.H6 C001
THE COMMANDMENTS AND SACRAMENTS, EXPLAIN
5522
3 0311 00037 4855

137

3 0311 00037 4855